Persian Women

Isaac Malek Yonan

[illegible]

[illegible]

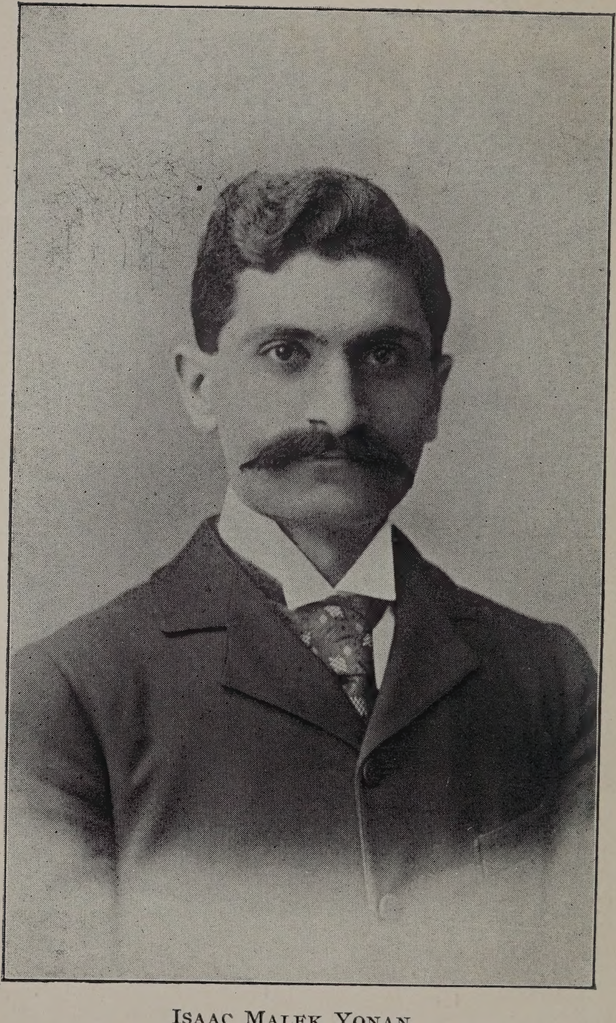
Library of The Theological Seminary

PRINCETON · NEW JERSEY

PRESENTED BY

Delavan L. Pierson

DS266
.Y55



ISAAC MALEK YONAN.

PERSIAN WOMEN:

A SKETCH OF WOMAN'S LIFE FROM THE CRADLE
TO THE GRAVE, AND MISSIONARY WORK
AMONG THEM, WITH ILLUSTRATIONS.

BY REV. ISAAC MALEK YONAN,
Of Oroomiah, Persia.

ܐܠܗܐ ܚܘܒܐ
ܝܠܗ.

"GOD IS LOVE."

LIBRARY OF PRINCETON
OCT 4 1951
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

NASHVILLE, TENN.:
CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN PUBLISHING HOUSE.
1898.

COPYRIGHTED BY THE AUTHOR.

DEDICATION.

TO THE SACRED MEMORY OF MY
TENDER, AFFECTIONATE AND LOVING MOTHER,
NOW DECEASED;
TO MY DEVOTED WIFE,
WHO, WITH HEROIC SACRIFICE AND
A WOMAN'S DETERMINATION, CHOSE TO LIVE
A LONELY LIFE OF SEPARATION FOR THE THREE AND
ONE-HALF YEARS, AND URGED ME TO COME TO
THE UNITED STATES AND QUALIFY MY-
SELF FOR FUTURE USEFULNESS;
TO MY SYMPATHETIC
AND TRUE FRIEND, MRS. MARY SNEED
LEWIS, FRANKFORT, KY., WHO FOR THE FOUR
YEARS OF OUR ACQUAINTANCE HAS DAILY TAKEN ME UPON
THE WINGS OF HER PRAYERS, AND WHOSE
CONSECRATED LIFE HAS EVER BEEN
AN INSPIRATION TO ME;
THIS MODEST VOLUME IS RESPECTFULLY
DEDICATED.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

PERSIAN ROMANCE.......... 1
Persian Romantic Mythology—Sentimental Literature—The Passionate Love Songs.

CHAPTER II.

THE BABY LIFE OF A WOMAN.......... 18
The Naming of a Daughter.

CHAPTER III.

THE CHILD LIFE OF A WOMAN.......... 27
The Maiden Life of a Girl.

CHAPTER IV.

THE WEDDED LIFE OF A GIRL.......... 36
The Betrothal—The Wedding Garments—The Wedding Invitations—The Wedding.

CHAPTER V.

POLYGAMY.......... 52
The Ceremonial of Marriage Contracts—Divorce—Detrimental Effects of these Marriage Laws upon Woman's Condition and upon Society.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MARRIED LIFE OF A GIRL—THE HOME OR DWELLING-PLACE OF A MARRIED WOMAN.......... 66
The Houses of the First-class—The Houses of the Common People.

CHAPTER VII.

WOMAN'S ATTIRE.. 78
Out-door Costume—In-door Costume—Physiognomy and Ornaments.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE OCCUPATION OF WOMEN........................ 88
Grinding Mill—Drawing and Carrying Water—The Preparation of Fuel—The Churning—Sewing and Manufacturing—The Harvesting—The Vineyard Work.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SOCIAL LIFE OF WOMEN........................ 98
The National and Religious Feasts—Public Baths.

CHAPTER X.

MUTUAL RELATIONS OF HUSBAND AND WIFE.......... 109

CHAPTER XI.

WOMEN IN THE CHAMBER OF SICKNESS AND DEATH.. 116
Burial Ceremonies.

CHAPTER XII.

CHRISTIANITY THE ONLY HOPE FOR WOMEN.......... 129

CHAPTER XIII.

THE NON-MOHAMMEDAN WOMEN OF PERSIA.......... 136
The Jews—The Guebres—The Armenians—The Nestorians—The Yezidees.

CHAPTER XIV.

PERSIAN WOMEN AND CHRISTIAN MISSIONS............ 148
Woman's Work for Woman in Persia.

CHAPTER XV.

THE AGGRESSIVE DEVELOPMENT..................... 156

CHAPTER XVI.

EVANGELICAL WORK AMONG WOMEN.................. 165
Women's Organizations – Pentecostal Blessings.

CHAPTER XVII.

TRANSFORMING POWER OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST.... 177

CHAPTER XVIII.

A GLIMPSE OF THE GENERAL WORK.................. 200
Little Done—Much Undone.

CHAPTER XIX.

MALEK YONAN.................................... 210

PREFACE.

During the four years that I have been in the United States it has been my privilege to address many Ladies' missionary societies, Sunday schools, and different Christian organizations, and wherever I have told the sad story of my Christless countrywomen a deep interest has been manifested in their behalf. From my limited experience, I am fully convinced that wherever there is lack of interest in foreign missions in any church or among the Christian women of the United States, it is not from indifference or cold-heartedness, but because of ignorance in regard to the real condition of these Christless women.

Dr. A. T. Pierson has said: "Facts are the fingers of God. To know the facts of modern missions is the necessary condition of intelligent interest."

For this reason, and in response to many requests, I have endeavored in the following pages to give a brief picture of the real every-day life of Persian women.

Trusting that some good may be accomplished by it, I send it out on its mission.

I have also availed myself of such help as I could get from such authors as Ex-minister S. G. Benjamin, in "Persia and Persians;" Rev. Sam G. Wilson, in "Persian Life and Customs;" Dr. Jessup, in "Women of the Arabs;" Miss Reed, in "Persian Literature;" Mrs. Isabella Bird Bishop, in her "Journeys in Persia and Kurdistan" and "Woman and Her Savior in Persia." To the latter I am especially indebted for suggestions with regard to mission work. From each of these I have found a good deal that I wanted to say, already expressed in much better English than I could command.

Would also thank Miss Annie E. Wilson, of Louisville, Ky., for kindly help in revising the English of my manuscript.

THE AUTHOR.

Presbyterian Theological Seminary,
Louisville, Ky.

Mrs. Mary I. Yonan.

INTRODUCTORY.

The author of this little volume, a native of Oroomiah, Persia, has been for about five years in this country preparing himself to preach the gospel to his own people. He was for one year a student in Westminster College, Missouri. He then took the full three years' course in the Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, being graduated with degree of B.D., in the class of 1896. Since then, having been licensed by the Presbytery of West Lexington, he has spent a portion of his time in a course of medical study in this city, and a portion in visiting the churches of Kentucky and Missouri in the interest of mission work in his native land. Two years ago he was joined by his wife, who has spoken with great acceptance to ladies' societies and gatherings of Christian women, telling in her own earnest and impressive way of the condition of women in Persia, without the gospel, and of the inestimable blessing which she and so many others have enjoyed through the work of Christian missions in the land of her birth.

Mr. Yonan has been with us in intimate association, in the class-room, in religious exercises, and in social life for four years, and all who know him can bear testimony to the purity and unselfishness of his character, to his earnestness and laboriousness as a student, to his intense zeal for the spread of the gospel in Persia and the world, and to his remarkable gift in vivid and graphic portrayal of the wrongs and sufferings of his people. Those who have listened to the thrilling stories from his lips of the atrocity of the Turk, and of the heroism of the Christian martyrs of Armenia, will be interested to follow him, as in this little volume, from the stores of his own personal observation, as well as from the testimony of other competent witnesses, he gives us a view of woman's life in that far-off but interesting land. Every reader will join us in the hope and prayer that the way may soon be open for him and his accomplished wife to return as missionaries of the Cross to the land that gave them birth.

T. D. WITHERSPOON, D.D., LL.D.,
Professor of Homiletics and Pastoral Theology.

Presbyterian Theological Seminary,
Louisville, Ky., Sept. 23, 1897.

PERSIAN WOMEN.

CHAPTER I.

PERSIAN ROMANCE.

The Persians are among the most romantic and sentimental people on earth. Their close contact with the Arabian literature, poetry, nomadic life and desert songs has colored the pages of their romance with passionate loves, tragic hates, burning sentiments, and uncontrollable resentments and jealousies, which are purely characteristic of the inhabitants of the desert.

The gorgeousness of their poetry, the fiery sentiments of their songs, and the bewildering descriptions of their fiction cannot be rivaled, even by the magnetic pen of Shakespeare in the tragedy of "Romeo and Juliet."

The wild imagination of its writers has wandered freely in the mystical wilderness of sorcery, and has found bountiful material from their fabulous mountains of emerald, and the lofty hills of ruby; from the great rivers, ever gushing from the fairy fountains and watering the valleys, from which the perfume of the orange blooms and the sweet fragrance of roses come ceaselessly to recreate the fainting hearts of the Oriental lovers.

Four things have furnished material and inspiration to the poets and singers of Persia, and have enabled them to pour out the little gems of their imagination and to weave the gorgeous web of their poetry and song, which are distinctly Persian in characteristics and style. We may term these the Persian's "Great Four."

The Roses, with their magnificent bloom, smiling at the face of the rising sun, and bowing in reverence before the crimson draperies of his setting, and filling the air with their sweetest perfumes.

"Each morn a thousand roses bring
 You say;
Yes, but where leaves it the rose of
 Yesterday?"

The Cup of Red Wine, freshly prepared from the luxuriant vines, glowing within the crystal glasses, to make happy the saddened hearts, "according to Persian sentiment.

"Drink, for you know not whence
 You come, nor where;
Drink, for you know not why
 You go, nor where!"

The Nightingale, with its golden wings and silvery feathers, hopping from bough to bough and singing constantly its harmonious songs in behalf of the red wine to the rose.

" 'Wine! Wine ! Wine!
Red wine!' the Nightingale cries to the
Rose."

And *Woman*, with her charming beauty and pleasant manners, makes the world a paradise for man. For "without woman how could there be romance or song?"

The poets and singers, having these four things for their theme, wrote fluently and sang feelingly; especially the local musicians, who with their violins upon their shoulders, would go about, finding nothing more attractive and pathetic than the stories of "Y'ar"—Sweetheart, and "lover."

PERSIAN ROMANTIC MYTHOLOGY.

One of the greatest achievements of this age has been the bringing to light the history of the hidden past into the living present. The stupendous stone has been rolled away from the deep sepulchre, and a buried literature has been resurrected with great triumph. The voices of the civilization and culture of the ages that are past are ringing clearly from the ruins of each city and rock of the Orient. Oh! what a cloud of witnesses to the living Providence! The tablets tell us that Persia, from time immemorial, has been the home of romantic literature, sentimental poetry, and luxuriant mythology. Among the numerous descriptions of deities and kings in the great pantheon of the Cuneiform Age, the story of "Ishtar, the Queen of Beauty and Love, the great Goddess of Romance" reads with pathos and feeling. Ishtar was the daughter of "Sin, the Moon-god," the original of the Greek Venus, and the prototype of

Freyja, the weeping goddess of love, among the Northmen. She is represented in the legend as dressed in great splendor, with her rings and jewels, her girdle decorated with diamonds and rubies, and going to Hades, the region of darkness and shadow, to search for her missing husband, Tammuz. At her arrival she found the door of Hades closed and fastened. Going to the porter she said, in part:

"Oh, keeper of the entrance, open the gate!
Open thy gate, I say again, that I may enter!
If thou openest not thy gate, and I enter not,
I will assault the door; I will break down the gate,
I will attack the entrance, I will split open the portals,
I will raise the dead to be the devourers of the living!
Upon the living the dead shall prey!"

The porter being greatly alarmed by the thundering words of Ishtar very politely and tremblingly said:

"Stay, lady! do not shake down the door,
I will go and tell this to Queen Nin-ci-gal."
The porter entered and said to Nin-ci-gal,
"These curses thy sister Ishtar utters,
Blaspheming thee with great curses."

The Queen of the Hades trembled on hearing the threats of Ishtar, and said quietly:

"Go, porter! open the gate for her,
But strip her like others, at other times."

Ishtar went to the first door of Hades and she was admitted, but her crown was taken away from her head. At the second door they took away her beautiful earrings. At the third door her precious stones were taken away. At the fourth door her lovely small gems were taken from her forehead. At the fifth, she was deprived of her emerald girdle. At the sixth door the golden rings on her hands and feet were taken away. And at the seventh and last door she was admitted, but was stripped of her last garment.

At each door she pathetically exclaimed: "Keeper, do not take from me my jewels and garments!" But the keeper did not listen. All these things she suffered and gave up her precious treasures because of her intense love for her missing husband. After she had wandered long in Hades, there was great concern on her behalf among the gods. And the god "Hea" volunteered to rescue Ishtar from the shadows of hell. As the result of his mission, the seven gates swung open on their hinges and at each she received back her stolen decorations and resumed her great honors and adorations as the great imperial goddess of Love and Beauty.

The tablets giving this narrative in full are preserved in the British Museum.

SENTIMENTAL LITERATURE.

If Greece had her Homer, Italy her Dante, and England her Shakespeare and Tennyson, Persia is equally proud of her Omar Khayyam, Firdusi, Hafiz, Nizami, and Sa'de, whose exquisite pearls have been great inspiration and stimulant to thousands of youth.

Their writings are sentimental and mystic in style, tender and pathetic in thought and beautiful and flowery in language.

One of the foremost of the Persian poets is undoubtedly Nizami, of Ganja, who lived in the twelfth century. He was the founder of the Romantic epoch, and has contributed more love songs to the Persian literature than any other. One of his best productions is his story entitled:

*"LAILI AND MAJNUN,"

Two ardent lovers, whose misfortunes and devoted affection excite tears of sympathy and interest in all the East. Majnun was the son of a chieftain, and Laili, the daughter of an humble Arab, who nevertheless possessed all the pride if his desert race. Laili was so beautiful and charming, that when Majnun first gazed upon her flashing dark eyes, and,

"The soft expression of her face,
Distraction stung his burning brain;
No rest he found by day or night,
She was forever in his sight!"

As Laili's people were accustomed to wandering in the desert, they one day folded their tents and went to the mountains with their families and cattle, leaving no

---

*A fuller description of Laili and Majnun's story will be be found in "The Persian Literature," by Miss Reed.

trace of their march, and cutting off every possible way for the two lovers to communicate with each other.

Majnun became almost insane in the vain search after his love through the groves and glens of the wilderness and the solitary rocks of the mountains. At length his father, alarmed by his condition, took an organized band and went in search of the Arab tribe. Finding them, in their mountain stronghold he made proposition of marriage for his son to the maiden, but in such a conceited and haughty way that he received a very cold and unfavorable message in response. The chieftain, indignant and full of anger took his homeward trip. When poor

"Majnun saw his hopes decay
He beat his hands, his garments tore,
He cast his fetters on the floor
In broken fragments, and in wrath,
Sought the dark wilderness path,
And there he wept and sobbed aloud,
Unnoticed by the gazing crowd."

Once, while wandering near the camp of the Arabs he was seen by some relations of Laili, who represented him as a wild and insane youth in the desert. The maiden, recognizing her lover in their description, rejoiced over the tidings though she feared to go out to meet him, dreading her father's wrath. But anxiously,

"From morn to eve she gazed around,
In hopes her Majnun might be found."

Once, while sitting at a fountain under a shady cypress tree near the encapment, with bright hopes of chancing to see her beloved, she mournfully sang her faithfulness.

> "Oh, faithful friend and lover true,
> Still distant from thy Laili's view;
> Still absent, still beyond her power,
> To bring thee to her fragrant bower;
> Oh, noble youth, still thou art mine!
> And Laili, Laili still is thine!"

While she was thus chanting her love songs under the cool shade of the tree, a stranger, a princely youth by name Ibn-Salaam, passed by. His eyes rested upon her crimson lips and the beaming softness of her dark eyes. Electrified by her grace and beauty, he hurried to her father with a plea for his daughter's hand. Because of his kingly apparel and dazzling ornaments he was favored by the father of Laili, who gave his consent to the proposed union.

The poor Majnun may wander, threaten, and try to induce his friends to fight the cruel Arab, but all is vain. The contract is signed and the father has pledged his word of honor.

The new lover brings his costly gifts; a long line of camels, all laden with embroidered robes, beautiful rugs and carpets, silks of all kinds, and the most valuable gems to be laid at the bride's feet.

The rattle of the drums and the shrieks of the pipes, the music for the marching steeds, announces the coming of the bridegroom, dressed in the richest cashmere, and smiling at each step like the rising sun. The wedding takes place in due time although against the maiden's will, whose pitiful pleadings were unheard and uncared for by any mortal. She still cherished Majnun's memory with tenderest feeling though the wife of Ibn Salaam now.

"Deep in her heart a thousand woes,
Disturbed her days' and nights' repose;
A serpent at its very core,
Writhing and gnawing evermore;
And no relief, a prison room
Being now the lonely sufferer's doom."

The rolling years and the whirling months did not bring any soothing to the heartache of Laili. She sat quietly in her prison tower, watching the circling of the sun by day and the flashing of the stars by night, with but a fainting hope in her sad heart for her Majnun.

Once, while sitting in her chamber meditating on her fate, she heard an unusual noise below; shrieks and wailing cries; a great confusion in the family. A messenger entered with a death note announcing the death of Ibn Salaam. Although the messags was a star of hope and a benediction to her heart, yet to fulfil the Arab law she assumed the garments of woe and wept with the rest.

"But all the burning tears she shed,
Were for Majnun, not the dead."

When the prescribed years of mourning were fulfilled and she was freed from her rockbound tower, she called her trusted servant boy and sent a hasty message to Majnun. She appointed a time and place for the two lovers to meet in communion sweet. She made her way through groves of palms and bowers of roses, not stopping until she saw the haggard form of her lover. Stepping gently to his side she laid her hand upon his arm and said:

"Ah, Majnun, it is thy Laili that has come!"

As he recognized the familiar voice and the gentle touch, overcome with emotion, he fainted at her feet.

"His head which in the dust was laid,
Upon her lap she drew, and dried
His tears with tender hand and pressed
Him close and closer to her breast;
Be here thy home, beloved, adored,
Revive, be blest—Oh! Laili's lord!

"At last he breathed, around he gazed,
As from her arms his head he raised;
'Art thou,' he faintly said, 'a friend
Who takes me to her gentle breast?
Dost thou in truth so fondly bend
Thine eyes upon a wretch distressed!'

" 'Are these thy unveiled cheeks I see?
Can bliss be yet in store for me?
Is this thy hand so fair and soft?
Is this, in sooth, my Laili's brow?'

"In sleep these transports I may share
But when I wake—'tis all despair!
Let me gaze on thee—e'en tho' it be
An empty shade alone I see;
How shall I bear what once I bore
When thou shalt vanish as before?"

To this, Laili responded quickly and readily:

"Here in this desert, join our hands,
Our souls were joined long, long before;
And if our fate such doom demands,
Together wander evermore.
Oh, Majnun! never let us part,
What is the world to thee and me?
My universe is where thou art,
And is not Laili all to thee?"

Majnun, knowing that, according to the Arab law, he could not make her his wife, with tearful eyes and faltering voice, answered:

"How well, how fatally I love,
My madness, and my misery prove;
All earthly hopes I could resign—
My life itself, to call thee mine.
But shall I make thy spotless name,
That sacred spell—a word of shame?"

"Shall selfish Majnun's heart be blest,
And Laili prove the Arab jest?
The City's gates though we may close,
We cannot still our conscience's throes.
No, we have met, a moment's bliss
Has dawned upon my gloom in vain;
Life yields no more a joy like this;
And all to come, can be but pain."

He clasped her close to his aching heart, and kissed her sorrowfully—his last good-bye.

Accompanied by her servant, she went back to her home and lived a most solitary life. The time of life's sunset drew rapidly nigh. She called her mother to her bedside and entreated that when she was dead, Majnun might be allowed to weep over her grave.

After she was gone, the faithful servant took the tidings to the poor love-stricken Majnun. He made his way weepingly to the grave and mourned over her for weeks. At last he was found with his head resting upon the tomb and the peaceful touch of death upon his brow.

Laili's tomb was opened and they laid the stilled heart beside her own.

> "One promise bound their faithful hearts—one bed
> Of cold, cold earth united them when dead.
> Severed in life, how cruel was their doom,
> Ne'er to be joined but in the silent tomb!"

Another of Nizami's productions is his story of *Shirin* and *Farhad,* two other lovers, whose devotion and sad life is no less thrilling and sentimental than that of Laili and Majnun. Some of the Persian scholars even admire it more. Shirin was the betrothed of the King Khosroe Parwiz and *Farhad* was a famous sculptor in his employment. These two fell in love with each other; and the King being aware of it, promised to give her to him if he could execute the impossible task of bringing to the city the abundant waters of the mountains. *Farhad* set himself to the Herculean labor, and to the horror of the King nearly accomplished it, when *Khosroe Parwiz* dreading the advancing necessity of losing *Shirin* or being dishonored, sent to inform him of her death. Being at the time on the top of a precipice, urging on the work of the aqueduct, the news filled him with such ungovernable despair that he threw himself down and was killed.

THE PASSIONATE LOVE SONGS.

There are numerous love songs in Persia that have never been reduced to writing. The musicians sing them with greatest ardor; and are always listened to with breathless attention. One of the most popular songs in Persia is the story of the lovers,

ASLEY AND KARAM.

They lived several hundred years ago in Oroomiah. According to the legend, Asley was the daughter of a Nestorian, a man of considerable means and from the well known family of the Maleks, who lived in a pretty villa, just a few miles east of the City. The daughter was celebrated for her beauty and gracefulness. She spent most of her time by a marble fountain just at the outskirts of the woods instructing her maids in caring for the plants, vines and flowers that grew so luxuriantly in her father's exquisite garden. She is represented as always dressed in her flowing Oriental costumes, embroidered richly in silk of rarest value, whose varied colors were constantly reflected in the crystal waters of the gushing fountain. The artistic garden, the beautiful girl, and the refreshing fountain were objects of special pilgrimage, and all passers by admired the unframed work of art.

But it was viewed with the added fascination of novelty by Karam, the son of a wealthy Mohammedan of a neighboring village. Once, as he was hunting in the adjoining woods, his "Lala-man," guardian, was holding the "Kurgoon," a trained bird, and as he let it fly to start up a flock of birds that they might shoot into them, the bird made a peculiar sound, awe-stricken by the loveliness of a woman, to attract the attention of the master and the guardian to the living picture at the fountain. Karam beholding the beauty and grace of her divine countenance, loved her from that very moment and made up his mind to marry her. Forgetting his hunting, he sat under the shade of a palm tree, and, inspired by her beauty, wrote poems upon the palm leaves and sent them to her by the "Lala-man." Asley in answer wrote poems of love to her lover of the forest, which, with their messages of love and encouragement, the guardian joyfully returned to his master.

The years passed by. The lovers' patience being exhausted, according to custom, Karam goes to his father and with pathetic pleading, persuaded him to visit her father on a love mission. But the difficulties in the way seemed as great and high as the everlasting hills. There were not only social problems to be solved, but religious differences, one being a Mohammedan, the other a Nestorian Christian. After many heated debates the Malek gave his decisive answer, that it was impossible for him to marry his daughter to the richest Mohammedan upon the face of the earth. Thus the father of the lover returned to his home with no word of hope for his only son. But Karam, nothing daunted, made his way every day to the woods near his sweetheart's home and sung the sweetest stories of his love, and wept bitterly over his disappointment for ten long years, so that her father was unable to persuade her to marry any one else. Tradition says his grief was so intense that the willows and palms have wept ever since in sympathy with him.

After ten more years, Asley's father being alarmed by the threats of the youth and the mental depression of his daughter, sold all his possessions, and taking his daughter started on a long journey northward to Russia, thinking in this way to get rid of the young Moslem.

But the love-insane Karam, bidding good-bye to his parents and home, followed the trace of his "Y'ar," singing touchingly:

"Oh Justice! I appeal in behalf of my misfortune
I have left my friends and fatherland;
I am a grief-stricken wanderer,
After my missing, black-eyed Asley.

"Though far thou mayest sojourn;
'Twill not discourage me to follow;
If necessary, I will enter into thy Church,
And bow with confession before thy cross."

The maiden's parents settled at length in a Russian town—a lonely family in a strange land. One evening while Asley was sitting on the roof of the house enjoy-ing the mountain scenery, she heard below her the tune of a Persian love song, sung by a wandering minstrel. She instantly recognized her faithful lover's voice and her fainting hopes revived with joy. After wandering around and singing his love story for awhile, he thought he would change his appearance in order to go to her home without being recognized by her parents. In this way he could at least get a chance to see his beloved "Y'ar." Allowing his hair and beard to grow long, he assumed the garb of a Dervish, "holy man," and went to the door and knocked. The servant came. He said to the servant:

"I am a man of God, a dervish, and have been suffering from tooth-ache for some days and have come to ask the mercy of your mistress to relieve my pain." (The mother of Asley is supposed to have been a dentist.)

The servant reported the dervish's trouble to her mistress who went to the door and welcomed him in with promise that she would make every effort to relieve his pain. She took him to her office and called her daughter to hold his head in her gentle arms while she was pulling the tooth.

Both the daughter and the patient wept bitterly. The mother thought the dervish wept because of his pain, and her daughter from sympathy.

After the first tooth was pulled, the dervish said: "Pull the other by its side, it pains me too."

She pulled that one and then he ordered still another one to be pulled, and another, and another, till all of his teeth were gone. Then, having no further pretext for remaining he took his head from Asley's lap and said:

"I have had thirty-two teeth pulled, but did not feel any pain because my head was in the arms of my love."

After singing a song, he begged to be allowed to rest his wearied bones over night in the comfortable home. Next morning he made himself known to Asley's parents, who wearied with the attempt to keep them separated, consented to their marriage.

But the end of their devotion was indeed pitiful. The night they were wedded it grew very cold. Asley drew her lover's seat near to the great log fire. As the legend goes, the inward burning fire of his long smothered passion was kindled by the outward warmth into visible flame. Asley, terrified at seeing her newly made husband burning to death, as she supposed, hastily snatched a pitcher of oil, supposing it to be water, and poured it upon him. This so greatly increased the raging fires that her own intense love also burst into flame. She threw her arms about her husband and together they were consumed to ashes. Such was the devoted faithfulness and loyalty of the two lovers, and such was the unfortunate end of their career.

There is a beautiful fountain in Geogtapa, a village about four miles from Oroomiah, which to this day bears the name of Asley. Travelers visit the place with great interest and often with tears of sympathy and admiration.

CHAPTER II.

If we were to draw our conclusions as to the status of woman in Persia from the romantic mythology of the past and the sentimental literature and passionate love songs of the present, we would be led to imagine that she had the highest respect, honor, and admiration of society, and was at the zenith of glory and happiness.

On the contrary, in Persia, as in all the Orient, the men deem it obligatory to make a profound apology whenever they make mention to their companions of a dog, a hog, a donkey, or a *woman*. With them, woman is no more than an idol of sensuality and a slave of passion.

Custom and Religion are the "Maga Charta" for determining woman's condition and position in society. In Persia, these are two mighty powers in remarkable unison and harmony, wielding a tyrannous sceptre over the blinded masses. The one represents the infallible dictates and sacred institutions of their ancestors; the other, the inspired principles claimed to have been given from heaven by the hand of the angel Gabriel to Mohammed, the "Apostle of God." Both of these indorse the inferiority of woman. The successive ages and the tremendous revolutions of history have been able to do little, or practically nothing, in developing or changing woman's social, mental, or spiritual status in society and home.

The object of the following pages will be simply to picture woman's condition from the cradle to the grave, and from birth to death, from the standpoint of both custom and religion.

There are periods in the life of woman in which great evolutions take place in her manners, habits, capabilities, and attainments. They are definite stages of life, each one with its own decided peculiarities and influences upon woman's physical, mental, and moral faculties. We will follow the order of these different epochs in our study of Persian Women.

THE BABY LIFE OF A WOMAN.

The baby life of a woman, according to the "Shahr," the law, of the Persians, must not be over two years, which is the extreme limit for nursing a child. And it can be reduced to twenty-one months. Any one going below that is "guilty of a grave misdemeanor."

The birth of a child is usually awaited with a great deal of agonizing anxiety. At the announcement of the birth of a baby boy the servants have a glorious time. They joyfully take the tidings to their master from whom they are certain to receive gifts and hear good words. The congratulations of friends and relations will begin to pour in from all quarters to the happy father, and it will be an occasion for rejoicing and festivity. The father will deem it a privilege to entertain his friends as an expression of his personal gratification. Noise, festivity, and music will fill the atmosphere with the echoes of a merry company. Everybody is happy because a son is born; one who will succeed the father, keep up the family record, and perpetuate the memory of the race.

But when a daughter is born there will be no giving of gifts, no festivity, no music, and no entertainments. Everything about the house, the very atmosphere, will be doleful and gloomy, as though the mourning over the loss of a precious child was already begun. The servants dread to take the tidings to their master, realizing the disappointment that will follow. When the father hears the message he will be in a woeful condition. Taking his pipe he will engage in an endless puffing, as though thus to mitigate his sorrow. The poor mother's grief is most sincere and pitiful. She weeps bitterly when her friends come to her, appreciating her situation. They address her with comforting words and encouraging prospects. Both mother and infant will be objects of hatred to the cruel father and the rest of the family. No word of comfort will be given to her by them, no kiss of affectionate love, and no help in the time of pain and sorrow. Their ancient proverb fully illustrates their feelings on such an occasion. "The threshold weeps forty days when a girl is born."

It is the custom for the friends of the married couple on the wedding day to sincerely express their good wishes by repeating the common saying, "May your wedded life be long and peaceful, with many sons and no daughters!" In short, the birth of a daughter is supposed to be a calamity. If a gentleman is asked as to the number of children he has, he will give the number of sons, never mentioning the fact of having a daughter.

One of the Persian grandees on hearing tidings of the birth of the fourth daughter was so much enraged that he left home immediately, going to a villa about four miles distant, and avenged himself by taking a large sum of money from a poor citizen, bastinadoing some of the others. For the common saying is that "if a man is the father of four daughters he will come to poverty, and if he is the father of seven, he becomes the curse of the community." One reason given for this dissatisfaction is that a daughter is lost by marriage, going to other people, leaving nothing for the father except the debt and expense of her wedding. While the son remains at home to take care of the parents in the time of old age.

The child is salted in the day she is born, according to an ancient custom (Ezk. xvi. 4), and subjected to all the superstitions so carefully practiced among their women. If it is a boy, no one can see his face for at least three months because the little thing is so precious that peradventure any one looking on him might die. A talisman will soon be brought on which are written prayers and verses from the Koran. This is to be fastened to the right arm or put somewhere near the body, to preserve him from sickness, and especially from the evil eye.

No mother allows any one to praise her baby boy; will usually dress him in unbecoming clothes and keep him dirty, fearing, if he should look too handsome and attractive the "evil eye" might cause his death or illness. She will, however, do all in her power to make him comfortable. When he cries she is ready to rock him to sleep; singing the sweetest baby songs in his ears, and kissing his tender cheeks because he is a son and a precious gift of God.

But the unfortunate little daughter will have no more attention than a domestic animal, at first. At the end of seven days she will be put into a hard cradle, wrapped tightly in swaddling clothes. Sometimes she will not be removed, for the whole day and night, and when she is it will be only for a little while. When she cries, the mother is slow to attend to her, and, at best, the only thing mothers do for them when they cry is to rock them in the rough cradle, which does not add much to their comfort, nor soothe them into silence. After a considerable amount of rocking and singing and harsh speaking, most likely the mother will get tired and angry and leave the little creature alone to cry until it can cry no more because utterly exhausted. At night it is even worse. For the temptation to sleep makes still more irksome the ministering to the needs of the despised daughter.

As for the father, months will pass before he will even take a distant look at his little daughter's face. When she is taken out of the cradle and placed so that he is obliged to see her, if she has the good fortune to be pretty and attractive he may, perhaps, speak a word or smile at her, possibly begin, at length, to love her a little. But if she is not good-looking he will have nothing to do with her. When she is old enough to crawl to the other end of the room, where he usually sits, she has another chance to claim his attention, and by her sweet, baby ways to win her way into his affections. This is all the daughter has to expect from her father until she is grown.

Such is the condition of the daughters among the masses. Among the first-class people, the most wealthy, aristocratic, and intelligent, it is somewhat different. They receive a good deal of attention, though not as much as the sons do. The daughters of these dignitaries are raised and nursed in some style. Having a number of servants and nurses who have absolute charge of the infants. The mothers usually deem it derogatory to their dignity and high position to have anything to do with their own babies, except to give them milk at the time of necessity. Every daughter of the higher class has a "lala"—chief nurse, corresponding somewhat to the old negro mammy of the South, but may be either an old man or a woman. These lalas look after the child and live with her until marriage, and then go with her as her chief servant.

Thus we see that there are four things in the life of a baby girl which occasion unhappiness and discomfort.

1. The fact that she finds *No Welcome* on her entrance into the world, and brings nothing but disappointment to parents and friends.

2. *The Cradle and Bedding.*—The cradle is made of rough wood, unfit for the resting place of a tender infant. Then, the child is wrapped in heavy bed clothes and fastened tightly in the cradle so that she cannot move in any direction, for her arms are stretched out straight and bound to the body. Over these wrappings another thick quilt is thrown and over the quilt a calico cover. The effect of this custom is to hinder the natural development of the body exactly as the Chinese woman's shoe does that of the foot.

3. *The Clothing.*—When the baby is taken out of the cradle for a little while, she is dressed in some short, coarse clothes, leaving the feet entirely naked while the head is heavily wrapped. It is the universal custom in Persia, even among grown people, to keep the head covered, while little attention is given to the feet.

4. *The Mother's Ignorance.*—They have no idea of the peculiar diseases and ailments of infants, and no conception of the proper food to be given nor the proper time to give it. Among the masses most of the mothers

feed the children on the same food that is prepared for the grown people; and give it to them whenever they cry, without system or regularity.

5. *The Many Superstitions* connected with the raising of children which are common among the women. For instance, they bind the eyes of a child very tightly with a kerchief for the first ten or fifteen days. This, they suppose, protects them from nervousness caused by seeing the light for the first time. Again, they never take girls out of doors for forty days (the sons are not taken out for about three months), because they believe illness will be caused by the expression of surprise from people that see them for the first time. Again, their eyes must be always filled with khol, a black powder, which they think keeps them from becoming sore and makes them pretty when they are grown. These, and others too numerous to mention, cause great discomfort during child life.

THE NAMING OF A DAUGHTER.

As circumcision is universally practiced among Moslems, boys receive their names at the celebration of this rite, when they are seven or eight days of age. But at the naming of a girl there is no religious ceremony, and no reading of the Koran or even praying by the Moollah (priest).

An old woman will be called to the house, who will take the ten-day-old girl in her arms and putting her mouth to the child's ear, will call the name that her parents prefer in a very loud voice, repeating it three times, adding: "This is your name!" And this is the way the little girl gets her name.

The Persian feminine names are very pretty and nearly always have a meaning. Among the most popular are "Akhtar," the star; "Gulshan," lilies; "Almas," diamond; "Shireen," sweet; "Nobahar," the spring; "Shamsi," the sun; "Miriam," the old Bible name, and of late years, "Mary," the sweetest name of all, has been introduced among the Christian element of the country.

As they have no family names, every girl retains her own sweet maiden name all through her life. When confusion is caused by several having the same name, they are distinguished by being addressed as "Almas, the daughter of David," or "Almas, the wife of David."

CHAPTER III.

THE CHILD LIFE OF A WOMAN.

One of the most enjoyable occasions of my life was, in the summer of 1895, while visiting friends in Lexington, Virginia. I was invited to participate in the celebration of the fourth birthday of a sweet little girl. The little thing was dressed in a beautiful white dress and her joy was inexpressible, as she went to the door to welcome her little friends. She was the proudest little thing I ever saw. As we gathered around the table in the center of which was an elegant cake with four little wax candles on it, one for each year of her short life, we were a merry company of happy boys and girls, and I felt as if I were the youngest of them all and was exceedingly happy. The sweet mother and grandmother were so polite and attentive to each little guest, it could not but be a joyful occasion.

In the midst of my pleasure a thrilling thought of sympathy entered into my soul; remembering the multitudes of boys and girls in my own land who received hardly any attention at all, no helpful encouragement, not even so much as a loving smile. To a Persian mother, it would seem ridiculous to spend a whole hour, simply in entertaining little girls for the sake of her daughter, though it might cost very little. From the standpoint of American parents, the older a child grows, the greater the responsibility of the parents. But it is quite the contrary in the Orient. There, the older the children, the less parents concern themselves about them.

This second epoch in the life of a girl, *Child Life,* usually begins in Persia when the baby is weaned and lasts until it is five or six years old. Thus you see, in Persia, childhood is of very short duration as compared with that of girls in America or any civilized country. As this is the age of small but important beginnings, the time during which lifelong principles are stamped upon the plastic heart and mind of the girl, either for good or evil, it is of vital and infinite importance that adequate opportunties should be provided for the mental and moral as well as the physical development of the child, and herein lies the responsibility of parents. To understand better their situation, we will just mention a few important points concerning the child life of little girls.

The first thing I will mention is the *playroom,* which is absolutely wanting in Persia. In point of fact, there is no place in the house where the children can freely play and romp. A Persian mother will not permit it because she hates the noise, and is too lazy to clear away the dirt and disorder they are sure to make. As they cannot play at home, they are obliged to go out of doors, to the streets, where they can do as they please. Or if they prefer to stay at home, they have to be silent and motionless, else they will be pretty sure of a good spanking.

Although the narrow streets are full of donkeys, horses, dogs and every kind of street life, still the children are very well satisfied with their playground as long as the summer lasts, since they have never known anything of the lovely parks provided by civic law in this country for the benefit of the little toddlers. But when winter comes and they are obliged to stay in the house the poor little things lead a prison life indeed. Even if they had a playroom, they would have nothing to play with for they have no playthings. The dear old "Santa Claus," who brings a supply of new toys every year to American children, never goes to Persia at all. The little girls have no dolls except very ugly rag dolls which are drssed in the indoor costume of a woman, so they cannot even amuse themselves by arraying them in a variety of dresses. Yet, though they have no toys or playthings, they have a good many games, when they can get out on the street. The most popular game for girls is with small pebbles. A number of girls sit in a circle, stretching one foot to the back of the next girl. Then each one in turn, fills her hand with the pebbles and throws them up all together, turning her hand quickly so as to catch as many as possible on the back of it. The one who thus catches the greatest number wins the game.

Another distressing deficiency in child life in Persia is a *schoolroom* or kindergarten; neither one of which has ever yet reached Persia. Indeed, if they had the kindergarten, it would have to be filled, at first, with ignorant mothers, who are really no more than children in their mental training.

There is still a third serious lack in child life. While the Persians have the most elaborate rules of etiquette for grown people, the little girls get no training whatever in manners and habits, and the boys not much more. The mothers will not take the trouble to teach them anything until they are obliged to, and, as they are not associated with grown people at that age, either in the dining room or parlor, they know little of table or society manners. They have only opportunity on the streets, to learn vulgar language, profanity, stealing, and lying, for which they are not punished, the parents rather smiling at them because they think it is smart. One day, however, I remember we were dining at a house and a little child came and wanted to eat with us. Against his parents wishes, he was given a place at the table. But he ate in such an ugly way that his mother was actually ashamed. She jumped up, took hold of him and beat him unmercifully, and then began to complain that her children were so ill-mannered and not fit to live.

I said to her, "You never try to tell your children how to eat or how to live, and have no right to blame them for not knowing."

Not only the Persian children, but the children in all the East, are neglected in the same way, the consequence of which is, that they have none of the ease of manner which characterizes the children of the American people.

Fourth, and most important of all, is the neglect of the religious training of the child. The Moslem idea of the soul, or the religious life of the child is very degrading. They imagine that until a girl has passed her thirteenth year, there is no use to teach her, or read to her, anything concerning religion as she is undeveloped and unable to understand it, while the Christian mother begins, as soon as the little girl can speak, to teach her the sweet prayer, "Now I lay me down to sleep," and to lead her thoughts up to God. Mrs. Bishop, the well known traveler, after some experience in the home life of Persians, says: "I have come to the conclusion that there is no child life in Persia. Swaddled till they can walk, and then dressed as little men and women, with the adult tyrannies of etiquette binding upon them, and in the case of girls condemned from infancy to the seclusion of the *Andarun*, there is not a trace of the spontaneity and nonsense which we reckon as among the joys of childhood, or of such complete and beautiful child life as children enjoy in Japan. There does not appear to be any child talk. The Persian child from infancy is interested in topics of adults; and as the conversation of both sexes is said by those who know them best to be without reticence or modesty, the purity which is one of the greatest charms of childhood is absolutely unknown."

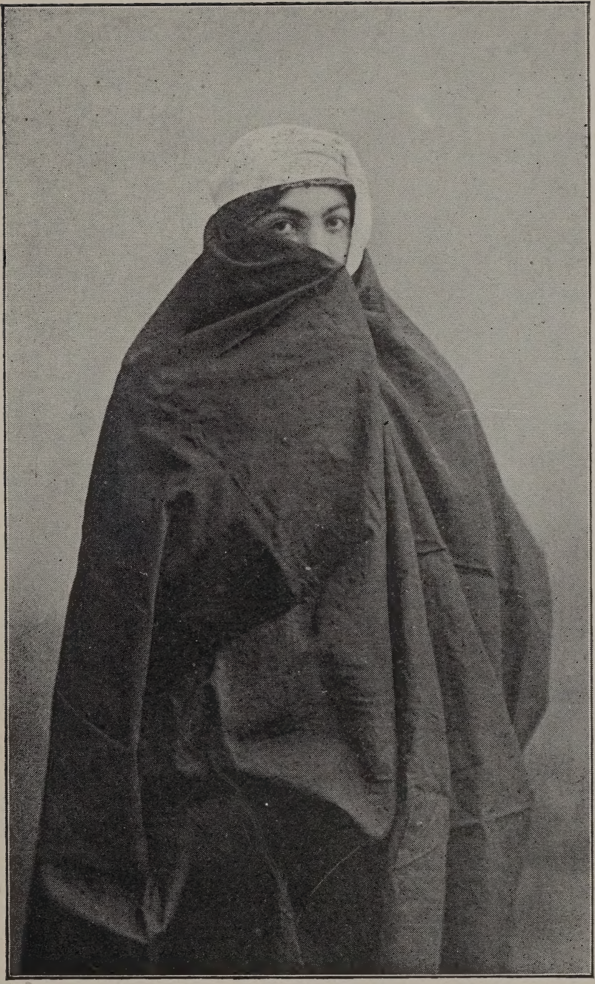
The greatest need of little girls in Persia to-day, is good mothers, mothers who will not only care for them, but know how to train them lovingly. If they could only have this, the miseries of life would, in large measure, take wings and fly away.

THE MAIDEN LIFE OF A GIRL.

The maiden life of a girl begins at the age of six or seven, and ends when she is thirteen or fourteen, during which period every girl is supposed to be at a proper age to marry. The life of a girl at this time, differs widely from that of a child. This is the age of activity and preparation for life's duties, and the relation of the mother to the daughter is closer than before. The mother feels great concern about the accomplishments and attainments of her daughter. Not so much, it must be confessed, from increased affection as from anxiety to make sure of the maiden's being well married.

In the beginning of this period the life of seclusion for every woman begins. They will be closely confined at home. All chance associations and meetings with people on the street, at home, or anywhere else, will diminish. The prescribed costume of seclusion for the home and the street will be assumed for life.

What the Maidens Learn.—At the age of six they will be put to work at home to help their mother, and, at



Mrs. Yonan.
In Street Costume, With the Veil Raised.

the same time to learn what will be useful to themselves. The Persian women are naturally domestic. They are taught sweeping, washing, cooking, and making tea at the accustomed hour, which is about 4 p.m., and preparing "Kalean," the water pipe, for the guests and parents. And they will be expected to give attention to every little thing about the house. They will also be taught sewing, which is supposed to be the crowning attainment of any girl. They learn to do the most exquisite embroidery and handwork, for which Persian women have always been famous. And this is about all the preparation they can make for their future life as married women.

The Education of Maidens.—There are no schools in Persia for girls, so that education is not considered an essential to the training of a woman. But I will say a word concerning the very few, belonging to the most aristocratic families, who are taught to read a little.

Practically, all education, in any way worthy the name, is confined to the male sex. The custom that requires the strict seclusion of females would prevent their attending school, even if there were any. Consequently, the few wealthy families who feel concerned to give a little education to their daughters employ a private teacher. This teacher is generally a moollah, whose piety is unquestioned, and who is either an old man, or in many cases totally blind. As these blind moollahs know the Koran by heart, they make very good teachers.

Having secured one with these qualifications, he will be permitted to go to the woman's apartment of the house and take a seat at one end of the room while the pupil sits at the other. Some elderly woman, either the mother or mother-in-law (for in many cases the girls receive their education after they marry) will be present. The teacher drills his pupil in reading the Koran and explains its teachings. Some few learn a little of poetry and writing, but this is the highest curriculum the most ambitious parent dreams of.

Occasionally you will find women of somewhat advanced age, among these best families, who have carried their education still further, and to poetry have added much history and painting. This is exceedingly rare, and such women are admired and envied greatly by their sex. They are usually addressed with titles to denote their high cultivation, as, "Mirza Khanim," Most Accomplished Lady; or "Moollah Khanim," Lady Priest, etc. But, by far the largest proportion of the women are very rough in manner and ignorant. Many of them cannot tell their age (which is sometimes true even in America). If you ask them why they do not study, or if they would like to learn how to read, they will answer pathetically, "I am a woman!" which means volumes in the Orient.

Although they, in common with the men, possess the Eastern mind, which is peculiarly quick and sharp, yet, being undeveloped, they become really stupid and child-like. The chief barrier to female education in Persia, without whose removal the prospects are not very encouraging, is the low estimation in which women are held. The shrewd Hindoo struck the keynote on this point when he said: "We have trouble enough with our women now, and if we were to educate them we should not be able to manage them at all!"

There is a general idea that for a woman to read is rather an infringement of female modesty and propriety. Should one suggest to a father to send his daughter to school, he would shrug his shoulders and say, sarcastically: "Shall I make her a priest?" A Moslem was once asked by one of the missionaries to send his daughter to a mission school. He replied scornfully: "Educate a girl! you might as well attempt to educate a cat!" Now what can these poor daughters and wives do, when their own fathers and husbands speak so contemptuously of them, which is always the case with Mohammedans.

CHAPTER IV.

THE WEDDED LIFE OF A GIRL.

Marriage is divinely instituted as the climax of all human happiness and the crown of all social relations. However, this can only be true when it is prompted by love and founded on love, pure and unselfish. For this is the essential factor in the problem of human happiness. The degraded customs of Orientals and the corrupt principles of their religions have led them to the conclusion that love has nothing whatever to do with the matrimonial relations. And that it is the duty of the parents or guardians to act as the only free agents in the matter, without any reference to the likes or dislikes of the boy and girl. This subject of the sexual relations has been given a prominent place in the Code of Laws in Persia. The "Shahr" gives at least 1412 titles to matrimony and divorce, besides the great number devoted to concubinage and slave-women.

Thus women, although secluded and debased, are yet the central figures upon whom every eye is fixed. A man can put himself under no greater curse than to chose a poor bachelor's life. On the other hand marriage is supposed to be the whole destiny of a girl. To be an old maid is something sinful, hateful, and absolutely out of the question. In fact, there are no words in the Persian vocabulary to denote "bachelor" or "spinster" since the Prophet hath said "Marry, and establish a family. The most wicked among the dead are the celibates." According to Mohammedanism, "there is no greater benefit to man than the possession of a Mussulman wife, who pleases his eye, obeys him and in his absence watches faithfully over his honor and his goods."

The Persian women cannot comprehend the mystery of the unmarried American missionaries, when they come in contact with them, and do not hesitate to express their sympathy to them. Notwithstanding the great importance attached to marriage, there is none of the sacredness and solemnity which characterize the Christian idea of this relation. With them, its main purpose is the convenience and sensual pleasure of a degenerate people.

Marriage customs in the details of the wedding, differ considerably in different sections of the country. The elaborateness of the proceedings depend greatly upon the social standing and the wealth of the parties. However, there is to a certain extent, a sameness in the essentials. To begin at the beginning, we will first describe:

THE BETROTHAL.

The common age of betrothal, for the girl, is between seven and ten years, very seldom over that. But in many cases a girl is betrothed as soon as she is born, or even before her birth. I have known men who were friends before their marriage, and while sitting together in a social way and drinking, one would suggest the plan of making a contract, that after they were married, if one had a daughter and the other a son, they would marry them to each other. There is a place in Kurdistan where the girls are sold just so soon as they are born, the family of the bridegroom taking the girl to raise. However, these are rare instances.

The Betrothal Ceremony.—There is a certain ceremonial, beginning after the parents or guardians of the boy have made up their minds as to whom they desire to betroth to their son. They first send a private message to the girl's father indicating their wishes. If her father favors the idea, he will return words of encouragement, and the date of the ceremony will be fixed. Then the father of the boy, taking a few of the relatives with him, with a ring, a pair of shoes, a head-dress, and some pieces of money, usually from five to ten coins (Luke xv. 8-10), with a great deal of candy and some other confectionery (the meat, rice, and all other necessities for the festival will have been sent before, so as to be prepared), goes to the home of the girl. After an elaborate salutation, they will be given seats and there will be a genéral conversation, lasting for an hour or more, after which the father of the boy will mention the object of his coming, addressing the family with a few polite and appropriate words. The father of the girl, who is expected eventually to decide the matter, will not make any definite answer at first. He will say: "The girl does not belong to me, she has a grandfather who must be consulted first." And then the grandfather will be addressed and pressed for a definite answer. After a few moments of silence he will place the matter before the girl's uncle. And so it will go the rounds of all the nearest relatives, each one being consulted in turn, just for the sake of ceremony and to make them feel good. At last the question comes back to the girl's father for a definite answer. And he will say, gravely: "My daughter is like a pair of shoes for your son." That means I am willing for the betrothal. Then it is the duty of the boy's father to get up and kiss the hand of every relative of the girl who is present.

Meantime, the ring will be carried to the ladies' apartment where the girl is, and handed to an elderly woman to take to the girl. Addressing her, the woman will say: "Your father, your uncles, and your brothers have betrothed you to so and so, and if you are willing to obey them, you can express it by taking this ring from my hand and putting it on your finger." And the girl is always expected to do it. Then the presents to the girl will be offered and feasting will begin, continuing until a late hour in the night. Thus the engagement is solemnized, and is as binding as real marriage. The breaking of one is very unusual and is prejudicial to the character and reputation of both parties.

The duration of the betrothal varies greatly. Some marry after six months, while other wait three, four, or even five years. We can hardly help wondering that a boy and girl feel so little concern during the ceremony of betrothal. In many cases it is no doubt because they are too young to understand the full meaning of it. The relation of the boy and girl between betrothal and marriage is not materially changed. As the girl is not allowed to go on the street, nor to show her face in any public place, the boy rarely gets a chance to see her, even from a distance. There is no calling on sweethearts or walking with them, nor any pleasant association together. It is considered improper for a girl to allow her sweetheart to see her. As the love of a Musselman is measured largely by the beauty of the woman, a boy or young man is naturally exceedingly anxious to see his future wife; and will often watch eagerly for a chance opportunity, or even a secret one, to meet or have a word with her.

The "old women" (not necessarily mothers, but relatives or friendly neighbors) who play an important part in these affairs and greatly enjoy them, are always ready to stimulate the curiosity of either party by describing or pointing out the other one. In this respect the girl has some advantage, if her intended lives in the same town or neighborhood. For, even when shrouded in the outdoor costume which hides her completely from him, there are small openings for her eyes, and she may catch many a glimpse of him as he passes in and out from the street or balcony. While the young man might meet his intended face to face and gain very little knowledge of her from the veiled figure. Once or twice during the engagement, the young man will be given the opportunity of an hour's intercourse with his betrothed, if he wishes it; but it must be in the presence of these elderly women. And besides, if he avail himself of the privilege, he must bring with him some costly present—a piece of gold, a ring or some other jewelry. Hence, sometimes from bashfulness and sametimes from stinginess, he does not choose to take advantage of it—prefers to take his chances some other way. In small towns and villages the restrictions of etiquette in this regard are not quite so strict as in cities. A limited degree of intercourse is permitted. In fact it not unfrequently happens that betrothal is consummated between a boy and girl who have played together as children on the streets. We will have more to say about village life later. The young people of America ought to appreciate the civilization which gives to them freedom of intercourse in this most enjoyable period of life. This intercourse should be elevating as well as charming. I fully realize how much the young people of the Orient are missing. Still, we must not forget that danger of harm and evil may be found at both extremes, and be very careful to keep the happy medium.

"'Tis well to woo, 'tis well to wed,
For so the world has done;
Since myrtles grew and roses blew,
And morning brought the sun.

"But have a care, ye young and fair;
Be sure ye pledge with truth,
Be certain that your love will wear,
Beyond the days of youth."

"For if you give not heart to heart,
As well as hand for hand,
You will find ye've played the 'unwise part'
And built upon the sand."

The Duties of the Boy's Parents to the Girl.—It is customary, during the betrothal, on any important festival or national day, and at the different seasons of the year, for the family of the boy to take appropriate gifts to the girl. For example, on the great feast of "Norus," New Year's Day, which comes on the 14th of March, seven kinds of confectionery and fruits are used in feasting. And these must be taken to the young betrothed, and sometimes, in addition a quantity of oil and rice, often a sheep, dresses, etc. When the spring comes, they must take her spring fruits or vegetables. And this has to be kept up until the wedding takes place. Neglect of these little attentions will provoke a great deal of grumbling and discontent on the part of the girl's people, and even in the community.

THE WEDDING GARMENTS.

One of the special features of Persian weddings is the extravagance. From the time the engagement takes place until the wedding is over large sums of money are being spent continually by both parties; more especially by the bridegroom's family. The wealthy may not feel the pressure much, but there are some upon whom it brings a heavey burden of debt for life. Still they think it is necessary because a man's character and generosity are judged by the style in which he marries off his son. The greatest expense is what is called "Parcha," the wedding garments. A few weeks before the wedding takes place, both parties will send their representatives "out shopping," as you say in America. And they will be engaged for one, two, or three days in making purchases. Usually, they buy from three to seven different suits for the bride, giving but small attention to the bridegroom's apparel, as he is expected to see after his own. As the expenses must all be paid by the boy's father, the bride's party are naturally inclined to be lavish. While the other party in seeking to modify their desires often raise quarrels or ill-feeling. The expenditure sometimes amounts to hundreds of dollars among the wealthy. When the "Parcha" is taken to the bride's house, all the maidens from the neighborhood get together and help cut out and sew for her, though of course the larger part must be done by herself, if she is old enough to understand dressmaking, and by her mother. Very few people employ dressmakers on such occasions.

THE WEDDING INVITATIONS.

The wedding invitations are strikingly different from those engraved cards sent through the mail in America, some of which are not even to be received until after the wedding has taken place. Persians only invite those who are expected to be present on the great occasion.

A day or two before, the bridegroom's people will despatch two or three men to the villages and towns of the neighborhood (Matt. xxii. 3) to invite all the friends, relations, and respectable citizens. They carry with them candy and red apples which are to take the place of the engraved cards. Handing a red apple or some candy to the family, they announce verbally the day of the wedding, adding these words: "So and so sends his love to you and to your family and says, 'the wedding is not my son's, but yours, come and bring your family.'" Then bidding them farewell they will go to the next neighbor and repeat the same thing, until their mission is fulfilled.

If there is a grandee or official connected with either family, the boy's father has to go himself carrying a sheep or a quantity of sweets and extend the invitation to him. In return he will receive the gift of a shawl or tailor-made coat for the bridegroom, with his excellency's good wishes and permission to proceed with the ceremony.

It will be interesting to mention that it sometimes occurs that some of those invited, from pique or ill-humor, will decline to attend the wedding. Then the father of the boy will go himself or send a near relative to pacify them and persuade them to come to the feast. (See Matt. xxii. 1-14.)

THE WEDDING.

On thanksgiving day 1896 my wife and myself were invited to enjoy the holiday at the home of the well known Kentucky evangelist, Rev. E. O. Guorrant. My wife had only been in America a couple of months. Everything was new and strange to her. It was announced that a wedding was about to take place at the minister's home. As there was no music, no dancing, no noise or excitement of any kind, my wife gave little attention, thinking the wedding was still many days off. (In order to excite her surprise I had not told her anything of the customs of this country on such occasions.) In a few minutes we were called down to the parlor where a few ladies were sitting quietly. Presently the bride and groom marched in from the other room and stood in front of the preacher, who standing also, addressed them in a few solemn words, offered a prayer, and the wedding was over and the happy couple getting into their buggy, drove off to their future home. I never saw anybody so amazed and electrified as my wife was that day. She still feels as if that wedding was a dream.

The weddings in Persia usually last from three to seven days.

On the first day the invited guests will begin to pour into the home of the bridegroom, which will be opened for their cordial reception. Everbody makes himself at home. Dancing, music, noisy drums, and the uncontrollable excitement of merry crowds will fill the air the whole of the seven days. The first three or four days are usually spent in feasting at the bridegroom's, while the bride's family are quietly going on with their preparations for their daughter.

The principal part of the entertainment on these days is,

Eating.—The home will be thrown open for, not only the guests, but for all the poor people and the beggars. Sometimes from five to ten sheep will be slain, or one or two oxen (Matt. xxii. 4.) Quantities of rice and other vegetables will be used. Three times every day, this crowd of people will sit on the floor around the long tables to eat, of course with their fingers, according to the custom of the country.

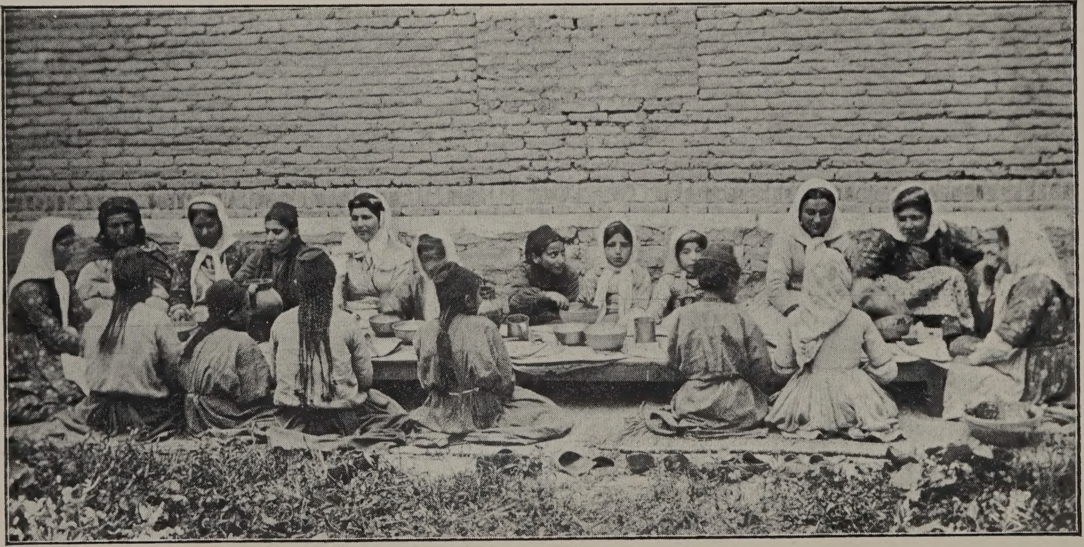
Dancing.—Between meals, they will go out to the open court which is like an amphitheater, or if that is not large enough, out on the street, to engage in dancing and singing, the women and children crowding the flat roofs of that house and neighboring ones to look at the dancers. The men, hand in hand, form a large circle, the one at the head, the leader, holding a richly colored handkerchief in one hand and swinging it in the air, moves slowly around, the others following, while the drummer and the flute-player stand in the center of the circle making a violent noise. Gradually they begin to get excited, and become more and more so until they jump and leap so rapidly their feet can hardly be seen at all. When one is tired another takes his place in the circle and thus they go on until noon. Sometimes the drum and flute will be exchanged for two good singers who sing love songs for the inspiration of the dancers. The women are not allowed to dance with gentlemen. They can dance in their own apartment or when there are no strangers present.

You will wonder how so many strangers and guests from abroad can be accommodated at night. It is customary for each neighbor who is present at the supper table, and meets with the strangers there, to take from two to five of them home with him when the hour for retiring comes and take care of them for the night. Thus, lodgings are provided for a great many. Sometimes there will be none left at the bridegroom's house. Then, early in the morning the drummers go about the street and summon them back for their breakfast.

On the third or fourth day they arrange to go after the bride. Some thirty or fifty of the choicest young men, well dressed and armed, and if the bride's home be at some distance some of them mounted on beautiful horses, march toward the house, where they will receive a cordial welcome. Everything has been prepared for their reception, the village people will come and the feasting will begin at the home of the bride. The bride's family generally look rather doleful during this part of the performance, probably on account of the expense. The next morning the bride will be gorgeously decked in her wedding apparel, in the woman's apartment, a red veil taking the place of the black one for the day, and covering the whole of her body. She is not allowed even to have the small openings to see through. Bidding her folks goobye, she is put upon a horse saddled for her, and at this point begins a tremendous uproar from the crowd—yells, shouts, thundering of guns, etc. The bride is carefully protected from every danger by three men, a "koolam," servant, holding the bridle and leading the horse, and the other two holding her, one on either side. Thus the homeward march begins.

The universal wedding yell, which is repeated every few minutes, resembles the college yell of America, "Hulla! Hulla! Hulla! Hulla!"

Each one of the young men belonging to the bride's escort carries a chicken in his hand which either he catches himself from the street or some friend catches and gives to him. This is called the bridegroom's bird." The procession advances as rapidly as possible. The



NESTORIAN WOMEN DINING.

city people often have these processions at night so that they can have the opportunity to make them more resplendent by fire works, that is by torches, etc. It was on such an occasion that the parable of the ten virgins was suggested to the Master (Matt. xxv. 6). When they are near home a messenger is despatched to carry the news of their approach to the bridegroom. For this he will receive some reward. The bridegroom then dresses himself in his wedding costume and, attended by his intimate companions, he goes out of his chamber looking as happy and gorgeous as the sun coming out of the chambers of the night. This part of the proceeding differs a good deal in different parts of the country. In some places the bridegroom and his staff just go a little distance to meet the bride. In other places he goes out on top of the roof and waits until the bride arrives in sight. Her horse will be led through the multitude to a corner of the street, directly opposite of the bridegroom, then he will shoot her with three red apples. Occasionally he aims too accurately and the poor little bride is struck and probably hurt by the red apples. Each shooting of an apple is greeted by the wedding yell from the excited crowd.

In some places it is customary to take the bride to the doors of the prominent people of the place and nearest relations, before going to her father-in-law's. This is considered a mark of respect to such persons, and at each house the family is expected to show their appreciation in some way. Some take a quantity of raisins and throw them upon her head, as a symbol of the "sweetness of the occasion," while others throw a great deal of copper money, a symbol of prosperity. The boys especially enjoy this part of the performance, and have a great time picking up the raisins and coppers under the horse's feet.

After this they proceed to the bridegroom's house and everybody will retire until next morning, when dancing and feasting begin again. The main feature of this next day's proceedings will be the welcoming of the bride's relatives and friends, who will come and bring her *trunk*, and all that belongs to her. Her trunk must be opened before a multitude of witnesses, and every little thing in it spread out before them. The contests of this trunk are not, by any means, entirely for the bride's own use, although she and her mother and friends have spent a great deal of time on them. They are mostly intended as presents for the bridegroom's relations and friends, and are the greatest expense which falls upon her father in connection with the wedding days. In the trunk there will be, perhaps, some half a dozen or more dresses, aprons, skirts, headdresses, etc., made for her by her parents; the rest are all the presents that have been made, consisting of side pockets, waist pockets, money bags, watch covers, woolen belts, skull-caps, and such like, all of which have been exquisitely embroidered by hand. These will be distributed among the numerous relations and home folks of the bridegroom. If the bride's father is wealthy, the trunk will also contain jewels, precious stones, shawls, cups of gold and silver; a "samawar," or teakettle with all its outfit; a "kalean," smoking pipe, etc. It will be as well to remark that these costly gifts, in many cases, are not so much for the purpose of expresing the parents' devotion to their daughter, as for the show and pride on their own behalf.

On the next day the guests will begin to depart. In leaving, each one extends his congratulations and presents his gift. This ends the wedding. The married couple, instead of taking a bridal trip to some distant land or city, will remain at home, rarely going out at all for at least two or three months.

CHAPTER V.

POLYGAMY.

For thousands of years the Orient has been the home of polygamy, which has been the source of great domestic strife, deceit, jealousy, and murder. Under its influence true sexual love has given place to sensual passion. It has been the means of thousands of heart-breaks as well as home-breaks, poisoning the happiness of races, nations, and families from the time of Abraham to the present day. Polygamy was practiced in Persia centuries before the Mohammedan era. We have been told that the Persian kings in the days of Esther practiced a sort of Polygamy which had been established by their ancestors in the patriarchal age. Since the introduction of Mohammedanism into the country, which has boldly sanctioned the practice in the pages of the Koran, Polygamy has been revived and carried to an extreme. The Mohammedan representative at the Religious Congress of Chicago, Mohammed Alexander Russell Webb, entered into a general denial of the fact that Islam teaches polygamy. He said:

"It is quite generally believed that polygamy and the 'purdah,' or seclusion of females, is a part of the Islam's system. This is not true. There is only one verse in the Koran which can possibly be distorted into an excuse of Polygamy; and that is practically a prohibition of it . . . I never met but two Mussulmen in my life who had more than one wife."

Either he did not know how to read his Koran, or he consciously perverted its meaning, in making this statement in the presence of such an august assembly. If he would remember, his Prophet was never so eloquent as when he expounded his revalations in regard to this very thing. We read in the fourth chapter of the Koran:

"And if ye fear that ye shall not act with equity toward orphans or the female sex, take in marriage of such other women as please you, two, or three, or four, and not more."

Again:

"Ye may with your substance provide wives for yourselves."

Again:

"The faithful may enter into temporary concubinal arrangements with any number of those women whom they have acquired as slaves."

He did not teach it by precept only, but by example also. For the Prophet had special revelations granting him higher privileges than his followers.

"O Prophet, we have allowed thee thy wives unto whom thou hast given thy dower, and also the slaves which thy right possesseth of the booty which God hath granted thee; and the daughters of thy uncles and the daughters of thy aunts, both on thy father's side and thy mother's side, who hath fled with thee from Mecca. and any other believing woman, if she give herself unto the Prophet, in case the Prophet desires to take her to wife. This is a peculiar privilege granted unto thee above the rest of the true believers."

On one occasion he slaughtered a Jewish tribe and selected a wife from those he had made widows. He coveted the wife of his adopted son, and could not rest until he had compelled a divorce so that he might take her to himself. Such is the attitude of the Koran toward polygamy, and such the example of the Prophet with regard to it. And his followers have not been slow to profit by it.

By the Persian law there are two kinds of marriage. One is called "Ahdah," covenanted. A person can marry only four women of this class. The other is called "Sekah," contracted. A person can possess any number he pleases of this class. But the highest privileges of the home are granted to the first class only. The wives of the second class are often made servants to the first. The children of the first class inherit the property of the father. At the same time, it is true that in spite of the privileges of the law, some choose to be the husband of only one wife, either from preference or humane feeling. Others take a second wife when the first is childless. While others have kept one hundred or more at the same time, and some who marry a new wife every new year if they can. It is no matter of secrecy that can be denied. It is taught by the Koran and defended by the priesthood. One, in his apology of polygamy, said:

"It is just like eating; you do not confine yourself to one kind of food, but set several on the table."

We quote the following from Mr. Wilson's "Persian Life and Customs." It is the sentiment of a great Mohammedan theologian, translated by "Daccian" of Constantinople:

"Glory to God a thousand times that I am an adherent of a religion which draws a wall about no section of my liberty, and imposes upon me no bondage in the matter of my desire. I take a woman to wife. She is of medium height. If my whim inclines to tall ones I get one of that sort too. Afterward, if I like, I get one of the fat sort, besides these, I may if I choose, pick out one or more of some other style, also. All these I may have for wives for myself alone. If I tire of any one of them, and she of me, and we agree on both sides, we can separate. She then can suit herself exactly in choosing another man, and I can pick out another woman.

"Thanks be to God, I am not a Christian, that I should be bound as a slave to one woman, or any woman be bound to me! . . . Besides all these, I can get myself just as many fine slave girls as I wish. In fact, whatever my whim calls for I am free to have. But my religion does not command me to do all these things. The question whether I will mate with a single woman and be a companion to her alone, it hands over to my generosity. Ah, it is a beautiful religion! it is a religion which trusts to my generosity. It does not judge me to be without feeling and therefore to be fit only to be loaded with fetters of bondage."

THE CEREMONIAL OF MARRIAGE CONTRACTS.

The ceremony for the two kinds of marriage are very different: The *ahdah*, or covenant marriage, must be legalized about a week before marriage, in the presence of a moollah, and witnessed by two men, or one man and two women, the parents or guardians being the agents of the contracting parties. The moollah writes a contract which is called the "Kabin," in which the full amount of the wife's dowry is mentioned. The moollah must be a witness that the two contracting parties are fully agreed as to the amount and character of the dowry, which should always be of a nature that can be weighed or measured. Before he legalizes it, therefore, they usually repair to the bride's home. He reads a passage from the Koran and repeats a prayer. Then he approaches a curtain which separates the males and the females, and, being assured of the presence of the bride, he will ask her consent. She is always expected to indorse her father's decision, yet, for the sake of the custom she has to be questioned about it. The letter of contract will then be given to the girl to keep so that in case of divorce, she may use it to secure the amount allowed her in the contract.

There are four essentials to the fitness of a girl for marriage of the first kind. Legitimacy of birth, virginity, fruitfulness, and chastity. The law strictly forbids any man to overlook these points. The law is also explicit as to the times when marriage may or may not take place. Marriage should not be consummated while the moon is in the sign of the scorpion; nor during an eclipse of the moon, nor on the day of an eclipse of the sun; nor at noon time, nor toward the end of the twilight; nor during the last three days of the months during which the moon is below the horizon; nor between dawn and the rising of the sun; nor during the first night of each month, exceptng the month of Ramazan; nor during the middle night of the month; nor during a journey, nor in a tempest, nor during an earthquake, etc.

The second kind of marriage, which is called *sekah*, must have a different contract from the one above. According to the law and custom, a man can have any number of wives under either one of the following three kinds of marriage: 1. Concubinage. 2. Exchange marriage. The law says: "If ye wish to exchange one wife for another, and have given one of them a talent, then do not take from it anything." 3. The third kind is peculiar to the Mohammedans of Persia. It is called temporary marriage. As when a man has to go on a journey, he will make arrangements with a woman to go with him as his wife, and remain until the journey is finished. Or sometimes a man has his office in the business part of the town while his home is a little distant. He will make agreement with a woman near his office to be his wife as long as he has his office there.

Four things are necessary in taking a wife under any one of these three conditions. Without them the marriage cannot be legalized: 1. There must be a letter of contract, written by a moollah in a legal way, by the consent of both parties. 2. The woman must be a confessor of one deity, the Allah, under any one of the monotheistic religions—Christianity, Judaism, Zoroastrean. 3. The dowry. A certain amount of money or property must be paid by the husband, half during the marriage term and the other half when the term of marriage has expired. 4. The length of time must be settled and written in the contract. A woman married under these conditions cannot be divorced until the legal time has ended, when they have to separate. And after the time has expired they can renew the contract if they want to.

DIVORCE.

An old proverb among the Malagassi says: "Marriage is not tied with a fast, but with a slipping knot, so that it can easily be loosed." And this is constantly done among the heathen population of Madagascar. A man does not need to bring together a mass of reasons for the deed, it costs him no trouble at all. He has simply to say to his wife: "Madam, I thank you," and she is divorced. If we are so much horrified at what the heathen Malagassi do, what shall we say of the Koran, one of the so-called greatest books of the world; a book which not one of its 200,000,000 believers among the human race will dare to touch with unwashed hands, which is never laid upon the floor, nor carried below the waist? It says:

"Ye may divorce your wives twice, but if the husband divorce her a third time, she shall not be lawful for him again until she marry another husband. But if he also divorce her, it shall be no crime in them if they return to each other."

The lax marriage laws are naturally accompanied by laws equally lax granting permission of divorce. The husband may divorce his wife at any time and at his pleasure, without any reason, if only he fulfill the requirements of the law. Sometimes a little sickness, anger, passion may cause a divorce. Barrenness or blindness are sure to do so. Sometimes the jealousy of a new wife may cause the divorce of all the old ones. In all such cases the husband, under the law, can send them away by giving them whatever he has pledged in the letter of contract. Or sometimes it may be, a wife is not contented and desires a divorce. In such case she must go to the judge, "turning up her sandal," which is the sign of a peremptory demand for divorce. She will say: "Kabinem halal, janem azad," I resign my dowry in order that my soul might be free. Then she will be divorced, but without any compensation, as she is the one demanding it. But usually, the wife who is dissatisfied and wishes divorce, will try to make herself disagreeable and distasteful in order that the husband may be provoked to send her away with her dowry.

The laws concerning divorce are very numerous. We will only quote a few important formulas from Benjamin's "Persia and the Persians," which will give sufficient knowledge of their nature:

"The divorce is pronounced by the husband in the presence of not less than two witnesses, both of whom must be present at the same time. It cannot be of binding force unless pronounced by word of mouth; a written bill of divorce is not effective except in the case of one who is dumb. The husband must invariably use one of three verbal formulas in pronouncing a divorce; any other mode of expression, even if the meaning is clear, being invalid. The expressions to be used are: 'Ente talekoon,' thou art divorced; or, 'Felanet talekoon,' such a one is divorced; or, 'Hazzee talekoon,' this person is divorced. The formula must always be spoken in Arabic. A wife must have kept apart from her husband the period of a lunar month to make divorce effective. If he has but one wife, it is not necessary for the husband to pronounce her name in the act of divorce; but if he has more than one wife, then the name of the one to be divorced must be pronounced at the time; otherwise, the fiat having been uttered, which wife is included in it must be decided by lot. The divorce cannot be pronounced by a husband under ten years of age, or of unsound mind. A woman cannot be divorced except on the fulfillment of five conditions in the marriage, of which the first is that the marriage was in all respects legal. A husband may in absence, divorce a wife by a mandate borne by a messenger; but no divorce pronounced on the authority of a third party is binding. If a husband, on reflection, retracts the divorce, stating that he had no serious intention of separating from his wife, the divorce is annulled. There are three kinds of divorce: the divorce by virtue of which the husband cannot take back his wife; the divorce with this right in reserve; and the temporary divorce, made in order to prove whether the wife is with child by a husband from whom she was previously divorced."

DETRIMENTAL EFFECTS OF THESE MARRIAGE LAWS UPON WOMAN'S CONDITION AND UPON SOCIETY.

The evil results of these marriage laws are seen in the infinite degradation not only of women as individuals but of society as a whole. For as is the sexual relation ideally or actually, such is society, peace giving and helpful or the reverse. Now what are some of the demoralizing effects of such marriage institutions?

1. In the first place, the laws of Islam are an utter perversion of the essential nature of marriage. The original marriage bond between man and woman is distinctively stated in the words of the creation: "Male and female created he them." A bond of essential oneness ("and they shall be one flesh"), between two, differing individuals. There are two fundamental princiciples set forth in this relation. First, that it is a relation between man as man and woman as woman. Second, that this relation is between absolutely individual man and absolutely individual woman.

This being the divine basis for the matrimonial relation of man and woman, we can easily judge from the preceding pages that the laws of Islam have vitiated both, in giving license for the practice of polygamy and in granting liberty for divorce. Therefore these laws are essentially sinful and ungodly. But some might say, these laws are justified by their fruits. So we will examine the fruits to find fully what they have to show.

2. The cruelty of it. What would be thought in America of a mother who would give away or sell her little daughter of eight or ten years, even if she knew she would be kindly treated? This the mother of the child-wife in Mohammedan countries can never know. Besides the little thing is often sent among entire strangers, to a strange city, miles and miles away from

her home, to become, it may be, the wife of a man many years older than herself, and more than likely with no other child in the house.

One little girl of whom I heard, when married at eight years and carried to her husband's home, cried bitterly and most pathetically: "I long to go to my mother! I long to go to my mother!

Of course these little innocents, with their minds only full of dolls and play, cannot possibly understand the new relation into which they are brought with this strange man. If you would fully appreciate the cruelty of it, look at your own little daughter, so happy and free, and sheltered in the safe nest of her God-given home, and imagine her in the place of one of these wretched little child-wives.

3. It degenerates and retards their physical and intellectual development. Girls become mothers at an age when they should be busy acquiring knowledge and improving themselves in every possible way. The consequence is that the women of fifty years of age there have actually less intellectual capacity than the child of twelve in America.

4. It takes away from woman her sense of honor and womanly dignity. Since law and religion have imposed upon the sacred sacrament of marriage such a hollow and unmeaning character, the people have come to think of it as merely a matter of convenience, and of woman as no more than the ligitimate object of man's vile pleasure,

5. Then, again, this system of marriage takes away from woman her sense of responsibility. Made subject to, and dependent upon man in everything, to be guided and directed like beasts of burden, their reasoning faculties are gradually stupified and they become incapable of the feeling of responsibility.

6. Again, this mariage system develops the sinful nature. It gives license to crime and vice, the awful and unspeakable vices spoken of by Paul in the first chapter of Romans. They have enthroned sin and cry to it, "Great is the goddess of lust!"

7. And, in the last place, the outcome of it has been the utter corruption of *home* and society. This system has put the poison of envy, jealousy, and hatred, between children and mothers; and has made the home a den of misery instead of the abode of peace and love.

A Moslem woman has no greater ambition than to find out the strongest drug, so as to take away the life of the favorate wife or of her child. Let us hear the authentic testimony of a moollah, on this point:

"They tell us that there are dragons and scorpions in hell. I am not afraid of them. I have a worse hell on earth. My two wives with their jealousies and quarrels, give me no peace. I could well leave them for other torments."

You can picture then to yourself the untold misery of such homes. The corrupt home suggests corrupt society, since homes and families are essential parts of it. Said Henry Ward Beecher:

"If womanhood has gone down, woe be to us; but if womanhood has gone up in intelligence, in virtue and religion, then the country is safe, though its fleets were sunk and its cities were buried."

These are some of the numerous and glaring evils of the marriage system which stands to-day condemned, not only by the law of God, but by every social and philanthropic sentiment of civilization.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MARRIED LIFE OF A GIRL.

Marriage changes, not only the environments, but the relations, duties, and responsibilities of a girl. This is not merely from human arrangement, or from habit in the history of past ages; but it is divinely ordained that a man should leave his father and his mother and give up all his old home associations and sacred memories and cleave to his wife; and so is a wife to do. It is a relation which is closer and higher than the filial.

After marriage a husband's highest duty is to his wife, and a wife's to her husband; like two halves uniting in one complete whole, which nothing in the whole world can put asunder save death or infidelity. They thus form together what is called "home," which ought to be a holy Eden, a pure fountain of life and joy.

We have been thus far describing what may be called the preliminaries in the life of a Persian girl. Now we come to the most important and practical part of her life; an absolutely new sphere, from which spring great avenues of influence and power in society and the community, the nation and the world. Here, too, we see the same marked difference between her life and that of her

American sister which we have seen so clearly in the earlier part of her life. She is not, in Persia, considered the queen, the counselor, and the inspiration of the domestic circle, but something of an inferior order, and in most respects a despised slave of the household. Every particular in the life of a married woman seems to be arranged by custom so that it will add wretchedness to her lot and keep her within the limits of slavery and seclusion. It shall be our aim to give a picture of the Persian woman as she is at home.

For convenience we have divided the subject into six different heads or aspects, beginning with the house they live in.

THE HOME OR DWELLING-PLACE OF A MARRIED WOMAN.

The Persians have a strong tendency to congregate in cities, towns, and villages. From the rich capitalists and the high official to the poorest peasant and laboring man, they all prefer to live together in communities. There is literally none of what is called country life in America. Most of these cities, towns, and villages have a high, thick wall of mud all around them, with gates for entrance, which are carefully watched. The reasons for this are, I suppose, first, for protection in time of war. In the olden days the country was settled largely by different hostile tribes, who would often attack each other, and the walls were a great protection to their property.

There were also numerous robbers and highwaymen whose whole business was thieving and pillage, thus constantly endangering life and property. There is still this danger and the citizens to insure their safety live in communities for mutual defense and protection. And, again, the custom of secluding the women has a great deal to do with it.

Their houses are planned and built so as to insure the strictest privacy. Each one is guarded by a great wall just as the cities are, for the protection of the individual family. The Persians, and Orientals in general, are not so open and ingenuous in their household affairs as the American people. However, there is considerable difference in this respect between the different classes of Persians. The poor and ignorant become comparatively careless, but the more aristocratic and wealthy a man is the more strenuously he guards the seclusion of his home.

Before describing their homes, it might be well to remark that the Persians, like most of the Orientals, have no word in their vocabulary corresponding with the English word *home*. The fact is, the very thing itself is wanting. The only word they have answering to it at all is *house*. There can be no home feeling, where woman is ignorant, stupid, and slavish, because it is she that can make a home. Hence they cannot very well sing:

"Home, sweet home! There is no place like home!"

There are three classes of people in Persia. Each class has its own peculiar house, according to its wealth and standing in society.

The Houses of the First Class.—The first visible part of a house from the street is a high, thick wall that encircles the whole lot. Through this there is only one entrance, a large gate, made of heavy, hard wood and studded with big-headed iron nails. This gate is kept shut all the time, and anybody that wanted to get in would have to knock hard in order to call the family, who in most cases live in some distant part of the premises. Walking along the street one can easily tell the official houses because they have always about a dozen or more men guarding the gate. These guards eat, sleep, and live in the small rooms opening into the gaterway at each side.

No neighbor is allowed to build his house higher than the mud walls, or if he does, he is not permitted to open any window, not the least opening, into his neighbor's yard which could make it possible for him to look in upon his wives. "They are very careful to guard their Bathshebas from the sight of any David." Entering through the gate, the interior will show the house constructed around a court or garden.

The first apartment we come to is called "beroon," or the men's apartment. Here the head of the family during the day commands his servants, transacts his business, and receives his calls. He comes to this apartment by sunrise, having previously had his cup of coffee or tea and offered his prayers. And here he stays until his dinner hour, which is at twilight.

The second apartment of the house is called "anderoon," which is exclusively for women and children, and is also called "harem," "forbidden place," a word corresponding with zenana or seraglio. The women live here all their lives, very seldom going out for recreation or a breath of fresh air. No person could venture to go to this apartment. If a man, by mistake or unwittingly, should attempt to make his way toward the "forbidden place," he would be quickly met by the guardians and eunuchs, crying loudly: "Women, away!" And the man, with breathless haste would make his way back. While the women would begin at once to conceal their persons with the veil.

The custom of secluding the women and watching them so carefully has come down from long generations. The kings in ancient days, in order to exhibit greater state and to preserve a pure lineage, introduced it first into the country, and it was gradually adopted in some form, by all classes except the wandering nomads.

The inner walls of the houses, fronting on the court, are of sun-dried red brick or stone. They are painted in the real Persian figures and in many different colors, thus making a picturesque scene for the eye. However, they are seldom seen by any except those who live within them, as few people ever venture inside the walls even on business.

The rooms are long in shape, with high ceilings; the walls are always very thick, not only in order to be strong enough to sustain the heavy roof, but also to leave space in the depth for takchas, or open closets, which have to answer for wardrobes.

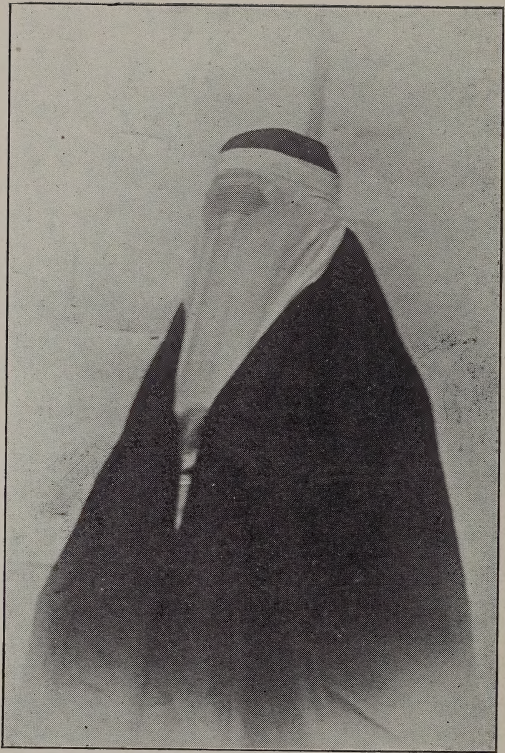
The roof is always flat, made by putting large beams of poplar across from wall to wall, about two feet apart, then planks and cheap matting, then earth, beaten or packed down hard, and then a kind of plaster, mixed with straw on top, from which the rain drains off to pipes around the sides.

The windows are only on the side of the house looking toward the garden or court. Some of them are very richly ornamented with fancy wood work and small-paned stained glass.

The rooms in the harem are all beautifully decorated within. The ceiling and walls are stuccoed in honeycomb patterns, some in pure white, others delicately tinted. Often small mirrors are inlaid to add to the beauty. They are elegantly carpeted in the Persian style, that is, with a large center piece and two *kenaras* or side strips, and a head piece at the side farthest from the door. The finest rugs are manufactured at Sinnah, Hammadan, and Yezd, and are very different from those often sold in the American market as genuine. The real Persian rugs have a thick, soft fur, in rich, unfading colors of a shimmering brightness. They are both pleasant to look at and comfortable to sit on. It is the fashion at certain seasons to cover the rugs with a white cotton cloth called "Rue Parsh, the face of the carpet." This is done by almost everybody, partly for the change, and partly for the protection of the rugs. There is not a single chair or table in any of these rooms. The Persian women prefer sitting on the floor to sitting on a chair, and there is nothing about their garments to make it uncomfortable for them. And if they wish any addition to the rugs they have cushions and divans.

The Persians are not very particular about having separate rooms for everything, although there are generally plenty of rooms if they wanted them. They prefer eating, sitting, and sleeping in the same room. There is no difficulty in doing this, as they have no bedstead to occupy the space in the room. The bedding is all folded together in a calico sheet, and during the day is rolled up against the wall so that it can be used like the back of a sofa, and in the evening spread out again. Some luxuriant pillows, made long and round, are placed around the rest of the walls and make quite comfortable seats nearly all round the room. So that after all we need not pity them for having to sit on the floor.

Around the walls, just about three feet from the ceiling is a row of shelves and upon them will be found many variously colored bottles, containing the most delicious



Street Costume.

Attar of Roses and many other perfumes. Attar of Roses was first made in Persia.

On the corners are placed bric-a-brac, and vessels of alabaster, and bronze figures in different sizes, shapes, and colors. And then there are many hangings of richly embroidered silks and shawls, which brighten the appearance of the rooms. They have no bureaus. Their looking-glasses are set into the wall or hung over a shelf. Every little arrangement in the furnishing of the rooms shows art and elegance and the signs of high taste and skill.

The best part of every residence is the large yard attached to it. In this particular they are ahead of Americans. The windows all open on the court, which is nothing more or less than a luxuriant garden, full of all kinds of roses, vines, and shrubbery, with shade trees and fruit trees planted in rows, forming long avenues from one end to the other of the yard. In the center of this court there are one or two small lakes, full of many colored fish. The rill from a fountain ripples unceasingly over the paving stones giving refreshment to the flowers and trees planted beside it.

To this spot the Persian poets have given the epithet, "behisht," paradise. Here the women sit upon their soft divans during the heated days of the summer and listen to the murmur of the waters and the sweet songs of the nightingale, while breathing the air laden with the sweet perfume from the roses. However pleasant as it is, it is their all, here they must stay summer and winter, year after year, until the last pulse beats on earth. We have a saying in Persia which describes the condition of these women: "The bird never feels at home in a cage, even if it be of gold!"

THE HOUSES OF THE COMMON PEOPLE.

The middle class are composed of the merchants and business men. The only difference between their houses and those of the first class is that they are on a rather smaller scale, with fewer rooms, etc. So we need not mention them.

The third class are farmers and day-laborers. Here we find a very great difference. This class live exclusively in the villages and small country communities. Their homes are made almost entirely of mud, not sun-dried brick, in a simple and unattractive manner. The soil is moistened into mud, and worked to a proper consistency by the feet of men and animals. Piece by piece is handed to the mason and laid on by hand, till it reaches a height of four feet and a thickness of three, the imperative custom of the Persian builder; this is allowed a few days for hardening when another layer of similar height, but narrower, is laid upon it and so on until the house is finished. In most of them the gateway opens immediately into the house from the street, few having separate walls around them. The outer walls of the houses are so rough that the birds find many nooks and corners in which to build their nests. The main part of the house is a large square room. It has no windows except four small unglazed openings, two of which are in the roof and have to serve for chimneys also. Even in the middle of the day there is not sufficient light. There is only one entrance to this room which is very narrow and low, so much so that often a man must bend his body to be able to go through. A lady missionary said in regard to these doors: "Future archeologists, studying the ruins of these houses, may conclude from the doors that they were built for a race of dwarfs." One side of the room is carpeted with a few cheap rugs, carpeting or matting for the sitting of the whole family, for there is no harem or separate apartment for the women in these houses. They all live together. Consequently their women are not quite so strictly secluded and guarded as those of the upper classes. However, if any stranger comes in they must at once conceal their persons and go to the opposite end of the house.

At one end of this same large room is the *tandoor*, which takes the place of the cooking stove and the heater also. It is circular, narrows somewhat at the top and bottom, has a flue leading to the bottom from the outside, and is usually about four feet deep and two and a half in diameter. It is smoothly lined with clay inside. Over this is the *Kursi*, a skeleton wooden frame like an inverted table, from four to six feet square, covered with a thick cotton quilt, which extends four or five feet beyond it. Cushions are placed under this and women huddle under it all the day, and in some places the whole family all night, which are kept comfortably warm. Every morning the fire is made and kept up for about two hours. And as there are no chimneys the room is pretty well filled with the smoke for that length of time, until it gradually makes its way out through the openings in the roof. The men can go out and escape this annoyance, but the poor women have to stay and endure, while they do the cooking and attend to other duties and suffer a great deal with sore eyes. The words of Proverbs are forcibly illustrated by these: "As smoke to the eyes," etc. Thus, instead of beautiful painting, smooth plastering, and handsome hangings, the whole ceiling as well as the rough walls are black with the smoke and soot.

The furniture is very simple. Only a few mirrors in the walls, and some bottles and earthen vessels on the shelves, with many bundles of bedding heaped one over another on one side. At night, when spread out it nearly covers the floor, as this is the only sleeping room for the whole family as well as dining room and kitchen. In the summer they take their beds and spread them on the large flat roofs, which is much more comfortable than the crowded room below. "Let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house" (Matt. xxiv. 17).

These houses have only a dirt floor and become very damp in winter, especially when the rain pours in through the openings in the roof, even though they catch all they can of it in vessels set for the purpose.

Attached to this room is generally another smaller one used for storing things, winter provisions, etc. And at some little distance from the house is the stable and the barn, full of hay and straw for the cattle.

This completes the house of the poor Persian family. Among the very poorest and the mountaineers, the one large room which we have described is the whole house. One corner will be used for the sheep, cows, chickens, and goats; another for the packing room and the center for parlor and bedroom, and the kitchen off to one side. It must have taken a great deal of grace and love to have enabled Miss Fidelia Fiske to spend so many days in such houses that she might teach and carry the gospel to these most ignorant women on earth. As you may well imagine, the filth in such houses is beyond description.

CHAPTER VII.

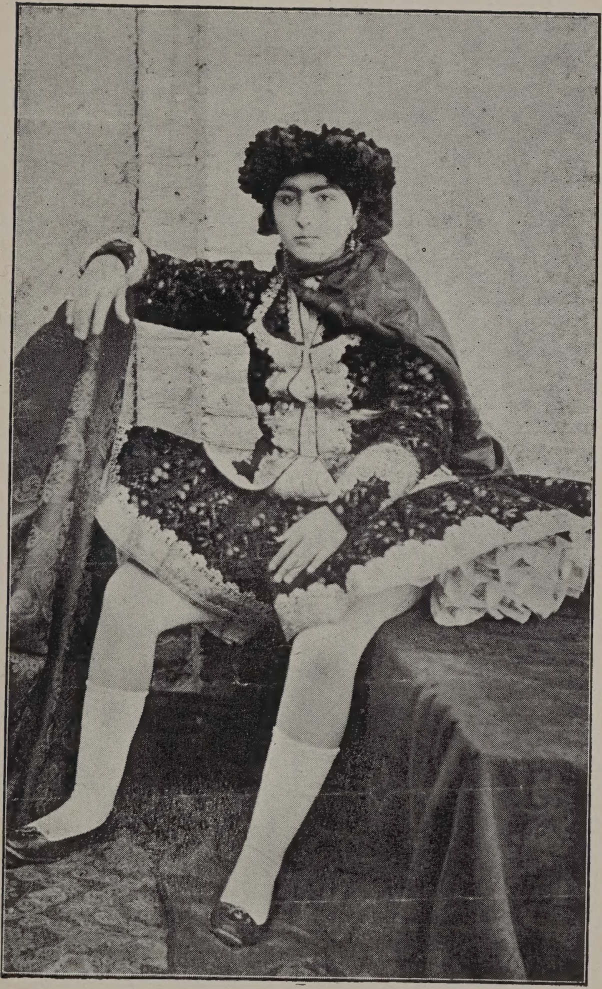
WOMEN'S ATTIRE.

The Persian women are obliged to confine themselves to the costume prescribed for them by custom and the laws of the country. Therefore they do not suffer from the inconvenience, neither do the men suffer from the extravagance of the whirling fashions. The outdoor costume and the indoor costume are altogether different. While one is lacking in comfort the other is lacking in delicacy.

Outdoor Costume.—All the Persian women with the exception of the few who are not Mohammedans, are expected when they go out, whether on horse or donkey back or in a carriage or on foot, to put on what is called the outdoor costume. It consists of four simple articles.

The *Chader* is a dark blue or black sheet of cotton or silk (according to the rank or wealth of wearer), about two yards and a half one way and two yards the other. This is put over the head and falls to the ankles, enveloping the whole body, and is held tightly in the hands from inside.

The *Veil* is of white cotton or linen, tied around the head over the dark chader, covering the face and hanging a little way down in front. Across the eyes is a narrow strip of lace work through which a woman can see and get her breath, but no one can see her.



MOHAMMEDAN WOMAN.
In-door Costume.

The Jorab, or "bloomers," are a pair of loose trousers with stockings of the same material attached to it. The stockings fit tightly on the feet and are gathered at the ankles. The material for this garment is usually of brighter color than that of the chader, or nearly so. But it is entirely by the chader down to the ankles.

The *Shoes* are sandals, made of sheep skin and usually colored red or yellow. They cover the toes but have nothing to stay them at the heel so that at every step the heels of the sandals clatter in a musical way. These women have no need of shoebuttoners, they can easily slip their shoes off and on.

This makes the complete street costume. When the women are thus shrouded no one can see any part of their person. Travelers are often greatly disappointed when they for the first time see the women in public. A gentleman from America who recently traveled through the Holy Land, came to the conclusion they were more like shocks of corn in the fields of Kentucky than like women.

The women frequently contrive to find opportunity to push aside their veil in order to breathe a fresh breath of air. This is admissible if there be no men about. But they sometimes do it for the purpose of disclosing their charms and beauty to attractive young men who may be passing by.

While this costume may appear, and is, inconvenient and uncomfortable in the extreme, especially during the hot seasons of the year, yet, without it women could not go out at all so long as the present social system is in force. Besides, it has its advantages. It is economical for the poor. No matter if a woman has the veriest rags underneath, if she has only the costume on, they cannot be seen. And the same costume can generally be worn for a lifetime. Moreover, it enables the poor to go out with the rich without embarrassment and without mortification, since with the costume on they all look pretty much alike. Again, it gives to women a measure of liberty which they could not have without it. When they are thus veiled they can go out if they please and even their husbands could not recognize them nor dare to speak to them nor raise the veil on the street.

The Persian laws fully guarantee the protection of any woman, who, wearing the street costume and conducting herself with propriety should be assailed or ill-treated by any man in public, and a Persian gentleman dreads no other disgrace more than being accused by a woman in a public place. I know a young man, who was walking on the street one day half drunk and a mean woman, realizing his condition, took advantage of it and cried out that he had assailed her and spoken impertinently to her. In five minutes a great mob was formed who dragged the young fellow off to lynch him. The governor being informed sent his soldiers who with difficulty rescued him from the mob. In examining him they smelled the liquor on his breath which was evidence enough against him. He was severely punished and compelled pay a heavy fine.

A few words in regard to the women of royalty may be interesting. Whenever they go out they are most scrupulously guarded by a large attendance before and behind their carriages. The forerunners who march in parallel lines on each side of the street, their silver rods in their hands, shout loudly: "Bar-mi-gardant," turn your faces to the wall! at each step. No mortal being will be left in position to get a glimpse even from a distance, of the rushing carriage. For the shops must be closed and every person on the street must turn instantly as if to examine the mud wall, until the last of the cortege has past. And the same when they return.

The Indoor Costume.—The women are as free and open in the indoor costume as they are concealed and disguised in the outdoor. There is hardly any comparison between the two. The whole costume within doors consists of several full short skirts reaching to the knee or a little above. Sometimes a great many of these skirts are worn at the same time, even as many as ten, and then they stand out in the extreme manner of the ballet girl. The rich women exercise a great deal of taste in the colors, trimmings, and embroidery of their skirts, for example, a favorite dress trimming consists of a bordering many inches deep of real pearls. When an English lady visited the princesses in the harem, the simple trimmings of her gowns attracted a great deal of attention; they were particularly amused at the number of seams in her bodices. "Look," they said, startlingly, "the English lady had so little stuff that she was obliged to join and patch her dress?" Of course they did not understand that those seams caused the gown to fit and show off the figure. Some are made of perfectly gorgeous silks, satins, and velvets, inwrought with gold and silver threads in elaborate patterns. Those who cannot afford this, make them simply of cheap calico and muslin. The Persian women are fortunate enough as not to make themselves slaves to the artificial waists. Once, when an English lady was trying to initiate a stout woman into a corset, before she had properly drawn the cords, the Persian lady gasped, turned black in the face, and begged pathetically, "Release from the torture."

Some of the women wear very tight pantaloons of a very thin white material, with beautiful lace work falling upon the feet, while others do not care to wear these.

The shirt or undergarment is a short chemise of tinselled silk gauze, or gold, embroidered muslin so transparent as to leave nothing to the imagination, and is very loose and short. This is the whole of the indoor costume for the summer. In winter, over the shirt and the skirts a *khaleja* or loose waistcoat is worn. It is of very richly colored material, with its fronts about ten inches apart, so as to show the flowered chemise, and has long sleeves gathered and buttoned at the wrist.

The most interesting part of the whole indoor costume is the headdress. First comes a cap made of velvet or shawl material, embroidered at the borders, with some pieces of money dangling at the front. It is put on the head so that the pieces of money will fall on the forehead. Over the cap is a large triangular kerchief. It is tied under the chin, covering the ears entirely, and one side of it furnishes what is called *yashmak*, the mouth cover. We might term it the bridle, for it is intended to answer that purpose. And this mouth-piece must be kept in place, sometimes covering the nose also, as a sign that they are not to talk, and as a sure sign of absolute subordination to their husbands, under all circumstances, right or wrong. While this is worn by all women, brides are required to keep it on more strictly than others. They are not allowed to speak a word aloud for years after marriage. Some of them never speak to their fathers-in-law and mothers-in-law in all their lives. This is considered the most proper way for a woman to show her respect for them, and for all the relations of her husband. The saying is, "As thick as the yashmak, so high is the respect paid to a woman." There is a current legend among the Christians of Persia as to the origin of *yashmak*. It says: "Once upon a time, many years ago, there was a very handsome woman, with a beautiful chin and mouth, and for the love of her a monk broke his vows and lost his soul; since then the heads of the families in Christian communities have compelled their married ladies to veil the mouth and chin."

The younger wives are also required to show respect to the older ones, by talking to them in a whispering tone. It is a wonder that they do not lose the voice and the power of conversation altogether. They believe that this is the only way to preserve peace in a house where so many live together. Nevertheless, the Persian women have gained for themselves the reputation of being the most mischievous of talkers, and the men firmly believe in the old saying: "When a dish is broken, the cat did it; and when there is a quarrel, a woman is at the bottom of it." When men, among themselves talk about the garrulousness of women, they relate the following story:

"Once when a number of women were assembled in a house, all standing and talking as loud as they could, all at once, in the middle of the house, a straw fell from the hole in the roof. The woman nearest to whom it fell saw it and said to the one standing by her: 'Saman (a straw) fell down.' That woman told it to another, and so on, and when the words reached the other end of the house it had been transformed to this: 'Zaman' (the name of a well known man in the town) 'fell down from the roof and broke his neck!' It so happened that the daughters of Zaman were present and they began to wail and beat their heads over the death of their father."

And so they do not take as authentic everything that is spoken by women. Not alone in Persia but in America also I hear sometimes complaints of the same sort. Some men would, possibly, be glad if they could adopt the Persian method of controlling women's tongues. However, it is no laughing matter indeed, to have a mouth and tongue and not be able to use it. If the gentlemen could have the same experience for a little while they could the better appreciate their cruelty. "Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding; whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee" (Psalm xxxii. 9).

Persian women do not generally wear stockings in the house. They seem to prefer bare feet. This custom is prevalent all through the East. The men as well as the women are careful to cover their heads at all times, even at home, while little attention is paid to covering the feet. Exactly contrary to American ideas.

PHYSIOGNOMY AND ORNAMENTS.

The Persian women are endowed with a natural beauty and attractiveness, nowhere surpassed. They resemble greatly their fair Georgian neighbors, who have been so famous for their beauty. Their complexion is clear, the features regular and the eyes always as black as jet. Blue eyes are not at all popular. The eyebrows are arched, black, and heavy; the hair straight and black, sometimes banged, and hangs down in many small braids, often reaching to the ground. Light hair is considered good cause for not marrying a girl, or even after she is married may cause her divorce; being so much disliked by the Persians. Round faces are considered the most beautiful and rosy cheeks as everywhere else. And the Persian women generally have an attractive smile. The lips are thin and the teeth almost perfect. I can truthfully say there is not a solitary woman in Persia with artificial teeth or gold-filled ones. The women, as well as the men, prefer fatness, contrary, perhaps, to the American ideal, and go far as to seek a physician's prescription to prevent leanness.

Thus naturally beautiful, they sadly disfigure themselves with paints and dyes. This is not looked upon in Persia as it is in America. There it is required by the all-powerful custom, and all the men prefer that they should do it. They have certain set days in the year to make each paint and powder, a year's supply at a time.

Etiquette demands that the hair may be dyed as often as once a month, with a dye compounded of indigo and henna, which makes it intensely black. The same dye, used on the fingers and toes makes them a very dark red. As they never wear gloves and seldom stockings the red color of hands and feet is very conspicuous.

The eyebrows are painted so as to meet across the forehead, with a blue-black compound prepared from some kind of herbs, and so heavily that they always look as if they were dirty. The eyes are filled every day with kohl, a black powder. The cheeks are reddened with a preparation similar to that used by some of the American ladies, and to that is added a white powder. When all this is done they look more like artificial dolls than natural live women, you may well imagine.

The Persian women, like most others, are very fond of jewelry. They wear bracelets, amulets, necklaces, ear rings, finger rings, and nose rings. Most of them have bangles of gold and silver coins, with beads of different colors, hanging from the neck to the chest, with others sewed upon their skull-caps and fringing their foreheads.

To the plaits of their hair they attach ribbons with coins of gold and silver, and other silver figures made for the purpose, so that when they move about these coins and jewelry make a jingling sound. They have belts of silver and gold filigreed most skilfully and attractively by hand, and set with turquoise and many precious gems. Emeralds, rubies, and sapphires are so abundant in Persia they attract very little attention.

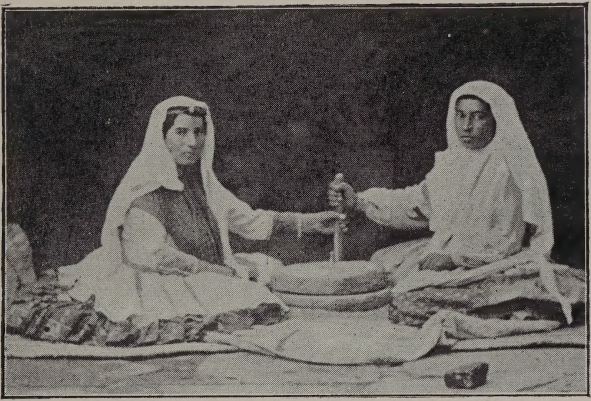
Thus while the well-to-do Persian women dress in silks and velvets, and have their ears and fingers filled with rings, precious stones, and diamonds, there are many thousands who live in poverty and misery, whose garments are tattered, and upon whose brows, instead of gold and silver pieces, are wrinkles, the thorns and briers of oppression.

CHAPTER VIII.

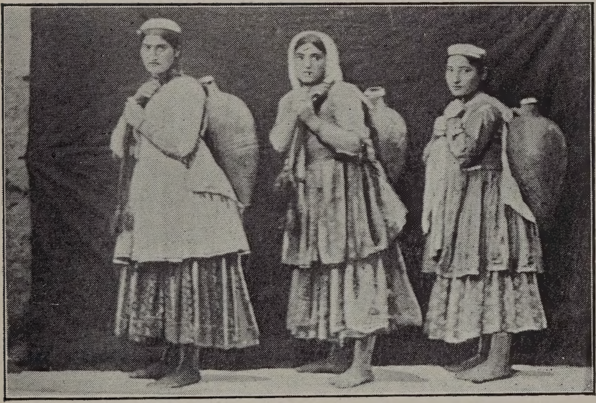
THE OCCUPATIONS OF WOMEN.

In the East there is radical distinction in the occupations of the sexes. Some employments are supposed inherently to belong to the man, while others as absolutely pertain to the woman. Should a man venture to do what ought to be done by a woman, either at home or outside of the home, he will be called a "feminine-man," a title of positive disgrace. And should a woman attempt to do what has the masculine mark upon it, she would not, I fear, be treated with the toleration and even admiration which the "New Woman" receives in America, but would be openly called "man-woman," and regarded as worse than an "Andromaniac." However, there are few or none such cases in Persia. The course of such would usually be stopped at the first by the severe discipline either of the husband or the father and brothers. While it may be admitted that there is a divinely appointed sphere adapted to the peculiarities of each sex, yet we cannot but condemn the enslavement of both man and woman to the extremes of fanaticism and custom.

In the whole country of Persia not a single woman will be found in store, shop, or factory, at clerk's desk, in



NESTORIAN WOMEN GRINDING.



NESTORIAN GIRLS CARRYING WATER.

teacher's chair, or in any department of business where sense, education, or training is required. The females of Persia are all either confined closely at home doing nothing, or busy, either at home or elsewhere doing hard, degrading labor.

Nothing strikes a foreigner more forcibly than when, for the first time walking the streets of New York or San Francisco, he sees thousands of women going about freely and at work in all kinds of positions. Such an one, not accustomed to the sight, actually shrinks from buying anything at their hands. It takes time to get used to it.

The occupation of the wealthy women is very simple and limited. They do little or nothing. Not even nursing their children or attending to their domestic duties, having numerous servants provided for every little thing. They only eat, sleep, smoke their water-pipe as frequently as they can, and gossip. A few of them, having a taste for embroidery and sewing, employ most of the day in fancywork. Some can read a little, but the majority are deprived of this pleasure. And, as intimated before, their faculties are sadly dulled by disuse, their capacities undeveloped and their bodies feeble from mere want of exercise. Knowing and doing little beyond painting their cheeks, powdering their eyes, and trimming their skirts, which follies can only belittle, life is only a burden, instead of happiness to them. "*Beebee Khanum*," the English lady who married Abdullah Hussein Khan, the cousin of the late Shah of Persia, and who lived five years in the harem, in speaking of the life of the princesses, said: "While there are some pleasant features connected with their life, yet there is too much that is terribly unhappy. Many of them can neither read nor write, and find life terribly dull, they sat for hours listening to my descriptions of the freedom and happy life of English women, and many of them long for liberty and education. Their conversations and habits are very unedifying and they badly need the discipline of schools."

On the other hand, the women of the laboring classes are veritable beasts of burden. Besides all the domestic duties, as cooking, cleaning, and attending to the little things about the household, which usually begin an hour before sunrise, they have the care and responsibility of most of the outdoor or field labor. Their time is thus fully occupied, toiling at the dawn, at midday and in the twilight, with very little chance to rest.

There are certain things which have come down from past ages stamped as the prescribed duties of women. A mention of some of these may give an idea of their every-day employment, and at the same time throw some light on certain passages of Scripture referring to women.

Grinding Mill.—One of the duties of women in Persia is grinding the wheat and barley into flour. In the parts of the country where water is abundant, water mills are built. And in some other places they have what are called donkey, buffalo, or mule mills, which are turned by power of these animals. But still there are many of the poor who cannot afford to have their flour ground at these mills, and the women must grind it at home in the old fashioned way of Bible lands and times. "Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken and the other left" (Matt. xxiv. 41). This mill consists of two heavy circular stones, with a wooden pin in the center fastened to the lower one and passing through a large hole in the upper one. Into this hole in the upper stone, around the central pin, the grain is poured by handfuls, while the two women turn it rapidly by the stout handle fastened to the outer rim of the upper stone. The grain, falling between the two stones is crushed into a coarse flour and thrown out around the edges onto a large cloth placed under and around the mill for the purpose of catching it. Besides the flour for the bread, they prepare every year a quantity of cracked wheat, which is boiled and dried in small cakes, from which they make a much relished dish peculiar to the Persian poorer classes.

Perhaps you would like to know something about their bread-making, also? They have round, wooden trays, much like what may be found in many American kitchens, and a heavy board and a rolling-pin. The bread is made up with leaven, worked and set to rise. Then rolled out into very thin cakes. The second woman has in her hand a kind of cushion covered with heavy canvas. The thin wafer of dough is spread smoothly on this cushion, which has a handle underneath so that she can hold it securely. Then she slaps the cake of dough against the hot side of the *tandoor* (oven) so that it sticks and cooks in a few minutes, when another is put in its place. A week's baking, sometimes two weeks' is done at once.

Drawing and Carrying Water.—Waterworks have not been introduced into Persia yet; all the water for drinking and everyday use is brought from a distance by the women. There are public wells or streams outside of each village. The women go evening and morning to these places and carry home as much as is needed. If it is a well, they have no pumps, so have to pull it up in an earthen vessel with a long rope and fill their jars from that, but if it is a spring they simply plunge the jars in until full, then lift it, first on the hip, then to the back or shoulder, and quickly march home. They go back and forth this way until all their jars are full, sometimes eight or ten times.

The jars are large and heavy, made of earthenware. They hold from five to eight gallons of water. It takes long practice and strong arms to lift these jars to the shoulder without spilling any of the water or dropping and breaking the jar. But those women, who have been accustomed to the exercise, need no dumb-bells or skipping ropes for the development of their muscles. It is a beautiful sight every morning and night when scores of women group together with their jars upon their backs and march to the spring. They find some compensation for the laborious task in the freedom to gossip and talk along the way, and look as if they really enjoy it. It reminds one of the romantic story of Abraham's servant and Rebecca at the well (Gen. xxiv.), and of the more spiritual incident of our Savior and the woman of Samaria at Jacob's well (John iv.).

The Preparation of Fuel.—There is no coal in Persia, and wood is scarce and costly. Hence a great majority of the people use in the ovens a mixture of cow manure, straw, and trash. The women and girls during the spring, summer and autumn seasons go about the streets and fields scraping up with their hands all they can find, filling a big basket to bring home. This they mix with what they can get from their own stable, and with straw and trash and work it with their hands into flat cakes, and leave in the sun until it is thoroughly dry. Then they heap it up in conical piles, often decorated at the top with a weed or bunch of flowers, for winter use, or to take to market. The women also have to go to the woods and gather fallen branches and twigs for kindling-wood.

The Churning is done in a large, oddly-shaped earthen jar, laid upon its side on what is called a saddle. That is a kind of hollowed bridge into which the jar fits and over which it is jolted back and forth to make the butter come. First, however, the fresh milk is boiled and a little sour cream or buttermilk added. Then it is allowed to stand until it has become perfectly solid. The mouth of the jar is then tied up tight with a heavy piece of canvas so that no air can get in, and the jolting begins. "Gathering the butter," etc., is similar to the same process in America.

Attending to the Sheep and Goats.—A great number of the Persians are herdsmen and shepherds. And, as in the patriarchal age, they live out of doors with their flocks. But the women not only do the churning, but the milking, the shearing, preparing the wool for market, and gathering of stubble and grass for the winter food. For this food they go to the mountains and fields, and make up large bundles which they bring home on their backs, and thus, in summer, lay by a store for the coming winter.

Sewing and Manufacturing.—There is so little machinery, worthy of the name, in Persia that most of the goods, whether of woollen or cotton, are manufactured at home by the women. They gather the cotton from the fields and carry it home, wash it, card it, spin and weave it into all the different qualities of dry goods. And the same with the wool; the work is all done by the women, whether it be the finest or the coarsest material for clothing; rugs, carpets, sacks, or tent cloth. No one can more fully appreciate Solomon's description of the labors of the virtuous woman (Prov. xxxi), than one who has seen these Persian women *at work.*

The sewing, of course, is entirely done by women. And, as the sewing machine is not yet domesticated there, all the clothing of both men and women must be done by hand. In the cities there are now a few tailors who make some of the men's clothing. But in the villages and among the masses all is done by women. Slow, tedious work it seems now that sewing machines have become so common in most parts of the civilized world.

The Harvesting.—Most of the harvesting, also, is done by women. It usually begins in the early part of June and lasts until the latter part of July or first of August. These months are very hard on the women. They have to be up early in order to finish their domestic duties by an hour after sunrise. Then they take sickles and march to the field, which is usually from one to two miles distant. Often one sees a mother with her infant in the cradle upon her shoulder and the sickle in her hand marching with the rest. From morning until sunset they toil with only two hours for rest in the middle of the day. The mothers put the baby-cradle under a tree, where they can see that no harm comes to the little one, and can stop and rock it if it cries very hard.

These harvest months are the very hottest of the year. The sun shines with terrific force during the day. Yet the women find heart for merry making and enjoyment, and one passing through the fields in harvest time will hear them singing their sweet love songs, two and two by turns. Though foreigners, who are not accustomed to them, say they are more like weeping and wailing than like merry songs. While the women reap, the men gather up the bundles and bind them ready to be carried to the threshing floor, which is a great distance from the field. Many a poor "Ruth" will be seen following the reapers, gleaning whatever may fall behind. At sunset they begin their homeward journey, tired and dirty. Their home duties are to come afterward before they are ready to rest.

The Vineyard Work.—By the time the harvest is over the vineyard work begins. The grapes are then ripe. The women pick the ripe and ready bunches, filling large baskets and carrying them to the end of the vineyard, where they are spread out in the sun to be dried for raisins. This usually takes from fifteen to twenty days. Then they gather them up and pile them at home ready for the market. The rest of the grapes are made into molasses and wine. Of course the men take some part in the vineyard work, but the most of it is done by the women.

So much for the summer work of the women. In winter they have only domestic work, which includes the sewing, spinning and weaving, embroidery, etc.

From the above descriptions you can realize some of the hardships in the life of a Persian woman. Yet, while they are strong and healthy they can get along very well under it, but when they become old, blind, or

NESTORIAN WOMAN CHURNING.

NESTORIAN GIRLS REAPING.

crippled, and can work no longer and have no sons to provide for them, as there are no public charities for them to depend upon, their case is pitiable indeed. There is nothing left for them to do but to stand at the street corners, or go from house to house and beg. And their pathetic appeals in the name of *Hassan* and *Housen* never cease from year's end to year's end.

Such then, is the condition of Persian women in respect to work. Their life is undoubtedly hard, yet, what else is to be expected of a race who regard woman as an inferior being? We are told that the excessive cultivation and development of the body and physical nature, coupled with the entire neglect of, and indifference to, the mind and soul have a tendency to cause man or woman to grow more and more like the beast and less and less like the nobler human creature. This has certainly proved true concerning the Persian women. From hard labor, their arms become like those of giants, while their moral and intellectual powers dwindle down to those of a little child.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SOCIAL LIFE OF WOMAN.

The Persians are particularly sociable as a people, and are naturally hospitable and entertaining. Full of humor and wit, they appreciate a good joke or an amusing story, and are always ready with an appropriate maxim or a pointed anecdote. In this respect they are, among Orientals, what the quick-witted Irish are among Westren nations. Their social life is conditioned on their domestic life; yet the two are widely separated, instead of being inter-related as in Europe and America. Men have their own social gatherings and women theirs, without any connection whatever. But the characteristic features are the same in both. Their elaborate rules of etiquette, flowery compliments, and the polite manners they have to assume in the presence of a visitor, while agreeable and charming, grow tedious when carried to such an extreme and repeated over and over again.

The Persian women have none of the advantages of the American women in the social sphere. They have no balls, parties, nor receptions. But there are four special occasions, on which social intercourse is admissible, after their own fashion. Some account of these may be of interest to the reader.

The Weddings.—An account of these has been given before. Every woman who has any connection with either of the contracting parties participates in the festivities of the wedding for many days.

The National and Religious Feasts furnish opportunity for social intercourse for the women as well as the men. During these feasts everybody has the right of merry-making. One of the greatest of the feasts is *Noruz, New Year's Day.* It corresponds in its observance to Christmas in America, rather than New Year's Day. The fourteenth of March is the Persian New Year's Day, and is the most appropriate time for it, as at that time the green herbs begin to spring out from their winter beds, the flowers to bud and bloom most beautifully, and the whole atmosphere is laden with spring sweetness.

The festival is of very ancient origin, and has been observed from the most remote days of the nation. There are two speculative views as to its origin. Some suppose it to have originated with the Zoroastrians, who were students of the heavenly bodies and taught that the world began to move in its orbit on that day. Others trace it to the time of Jemshid-Jem, one of the first founders of the Persian monarchy, who is supposed to have lived at the time of the flood.

A week before the great event takes place, each family and individual begins preparations. The stores and shops and all the bazaars are elaborately decorated and kept open most of the night. The heads of families buy their "yedi-lawoon," which is one of the indispensable specialties of the occasion; every one must have a new suit of clothes made, men suspend business; women dye their hair and paint their eyebrows and cheeks afresh, and dye their hands and feet, and even the children are merry with anticipation, and the joy of coming events fills the veins of everybody. The feasting lasts for ten days. New Year's eve is particularly enjoyable. Every family will have their firecrackers, Roman candles, etc., and spend most of the night upon the roofs. And there will be a grand display of fireworks from each housetop, so that cities and towns look as though they were all ablaze.

In the morning the servants receive their gifts and are then set free for the day, that they may spend the feast with their families. The women visit their friends; the poor go to the rich to receive the compliments of the season in gifts of money, food, or clothing.

The "Holy Dervishes" pitch their tents at the gateways of prominent men of the city and there they stay until feasted to their hearts' content, and presented with whatever else they choose to claim. As it is considered a disgrace for a dervish to be obliged, by refusal or delay, to remain long in one place, they do not hesitate to make the most extortionate demands, and generally get whatever they ask for.

Eating, drinking, and smoking are the order of the day. New Year's calls are from one to two hours in length, and at each place of calling the smoking and refreshments will be served. At each place also, a person is expected to show his respect to the host or hostess by *not refusing to eat something.*

One of the most admirable features of the day is the visiting of the afflicted and bereaved families. Such families are not expected to furnish anything for the festivities at their own homes; the visitors supply everything. The only part of the entertainment provided by the family is the smoking pipe and bitter coffee; both of which are signs of mourning in that country. In this manner the days of the great feast are spent.

There are four things which every family endeavors to secure for entertainment of their friends at this time. These, the rich, of course, may have all the year round as they want them, but even the poor, those who have to work hard for a daily living, make every effort to procure the appropriate luxuries for the New Year's festival. One of these is the "Kalean," smoking pipe. It consists of a vase or bottle of glass, or china, decorated with the picture of the Shah, holding a quart of water. Through the narrow neck of this passes a wooden tube reaching halfway down into the water and extending some distance above the neck of the vase, where it enters another vessel of brass, silver, or gold, sometimes richly ornamented with turquoise or enamel. This is called the "head," and contains a layer of dampened tobacco with some pieces of burning charcoal on top of it. From this tube, just above the mouth of the lower vessel is another tube, "the mouth piece," through which the smoking is done. One of these smoking pipes will be sufficient for several persons at a time, each taking a turn and turn about, as they do not care to smoke it long at a time. The women are as fond of smoking the kalean as the men, and the great ambition of everybody is to have a good supply of the best tobacco, brought from Sheraz, for the feast. Another of the luxuries of the season is a variety of luscious drinks, such as sherbets made of lemon, plum, cherry, rose, and grape syrups deliciously flavored and fragrant; skanjabi, made of honey and vinegar and generally used when eating lettuce; tea and coffee. The tea is made in the *samawar* and served in small glasses, very strong and very sweet, but without cream. Three glasses will about make a good sized coffee cup. Coffee is made and served in the same way, always without cream, and in mourning, without sugar. Still another part of the entertainment is "Yedi-lawoon," which is confectionery and fruit, seven kinds, always. There will be, in each house, a table loaded with them all through the days of the feast.

Among the candies peculiar to Persia are *gaz*, made of the juice of a tree which is richly flavored; *peshmak*, made of sugar and butter, and shaped into little cones, and a sweetmeat made of pomegranate jelly, which is very delicious. Besides these they have burned almonds, sugared, with other nuts, raisins, figs, pomegranates, dates, grapes, apples, pears, and other fruits, all of which abound in Persia. From this abundance they select seven kinds, according to fancy.

Last, but not least, we will mention "Pelow," rice, cooked according to a certain Persian style. They first take the rice, wash and boil it in water, putting a great deal of salt in it. When it begins to get a little soft they drain off all the water and let it cool. Then putting some melted butter in another kettle they put the rice in and add some more melted butter on the top, with a variety of spices, and cover closely so as to exclude the air, and the kettle is again placed over the red hot charcoal. Thus it will be steamed for more than an hour when it will be ready to eat. As they do not use knives or forks nor spoons in eating pelow, the fingers do the work. While pelow is a daily dish with the rich, the poor can have simple rice every day, but pelow only on holidays or feast days.

Public Baths.—The third opportunity for social enjoyment is at the public or private bath rooms. Religion, as well as custom, among the Persians requires frequent ablutions. As there are no conveniences for this purpose in the houses, they have constructed public baths, so that everybody can avail themselves of them by paying ten or fifteen cents for one or two hours bathing.

The women get together once a week and go to these places and sometimes spend half a day bathing, dyeing their hair and eyebrows and gossiping.

These houses are constructed below the surface of the ground so that they can be supplied with water from the streets, not through pipes, but from open trenches running through the city. Consequently the water is far from pure. Besides, it is kept in the tanks until it becomes old and stale, and often causes or propagates diseases. The buildings are all arched into little domes having a few holes on the top covered with colored glass or alabaster. They are heated with steam to such a high temperature that often persons, not accustomed to it, faint the first time they try it.

The rich people have their private baths attached to their own houses. Sometimes a wealthy woman entertains women of her rank by inviting them to spend the day in the bath rooms. The bath is followed by tea and kalean, served in the front hall of the bath.

On the other hand, in the villages, where there are no public baths, the women find a warm place in the stables, where they take jars of hot water and spend a few hours bathing and chatting.

Visiting.—Friendly calls are frequent among some classes of women. This interchange of visits is governed by etiquette similar to that of the men. Among the higher classes of society this etiquette is very elaborate.

When a lady wishes to pay a visit, a notice will be sent first. If the visitor and the hostess are equal in rank the notice will be a written document, and will be acknowledged in the same way. When the visitor outranks the hostess, a verbal notice will be sent a few hours before. It is customary for callers to go in a style suited to their own rank, accompanied by a host of servants on horseback, who go ahead to clear away all obstacles. And the lady, with her maidens all dressed in their outdoor costume, rides through the streets following the servants. When they approach the house a servant is dispatched to announce the arrival of the visitor. On dismounting, the lady is escorted by a number of servants, through the premises into the presence of the hostess, who receives her according to their relative rank, either at the court, or just at the steps. (In case the hostess outranks the visitor she remains sitting in her reception room until the visitor is ushered in.) Then a place will be pointed out for the visitor to sit. But she must always be careful not to accept the offer if the place is too high for her; for every woman is seated according to her rank. The most honorable seats are in that part of the room farthest from the door, by the rug called the headpiece.

After the visitor is seated, an elaborate exchange of bows and salaams follow, accompanied by flowery compliments and honeyed phrases about health, prospects, and home affairs. Refreshments, suited to the occasion or season will be served; as, hot drinks in winter, cooling drinks in summer. Coffee always comes last of all, and indicates the end of the refreshments.

Pipes are renewed every few minutes. The servants of the guest will also be attended to and served with refreshments by the servants of the hostess.

After the cup of coffee the visitor bows and takes her leave in the same style as she came.

But the most important kind of visiting is when a lady of high rank wishes to visit a village or community at a distance of five or six miles. The villagers are, of course, peasants and laboring people of the lower order. The lady first sends a servant to the house of the chief of the village to announce her coming, and his house will be made ready for her reception by being thoroughly cleansed in every nook and corner and fitted up with the best rugs which can be borrowed from all the neighbors. The lady is usually escorted by a number of servants for protection, the whole party being on horseback. If the visit is to a still greater distance, say thirty or fifty miles, she travels by another mode, which, though slow, is very comfortable. This is the *takht-rawan*, a sort of palanquin with shafts extending lengthwise and strapped on either side of mules, one before and one behind. This carriage is large enough to admit of any comfortable position, and the mules have plenty of bells to make a merry noise as they go along.

There is still another less expensive mode of conveyance, that by the *kajawa.* Two small vehicles are suspended like saddle-bags, across the mule's back. These are much smaller and more cramped every way, with only a calico cover to keep out the sun. Still they have a right pleasant motion, and for a long trip are less tiresome than horseback. Two women can be accommodated in one of these arrangements, if two of equal rank happen to be going at the same time. Otherwise something else must be found to balance. Even when well balanced the mule must be driven very slowly to keep the kajawa from upsetting or getting out of place.

At the approach of the visitor the citizens go out about a mile to welcome her, sometimes killing a sheep or a cow before her as a kind of sacrifice in her honor, and will bow several times to the ground most reverently. To all this some of the members of her escort respond on her behalf. Then she will be guided to the residence prepared for her, where she will be feasted for many days.

The following are some of the forms of entertainment on such occasions. *Music*, on the guitar and santoor (an instrument something like an audoharp only larger), sometimes accompanied by singing. *Dancing*—The Persian women greatly enjoy dancing. It is done by professional dancing women in the indoor costume, which is not overly modest at best, and with handkerchiefs in hand, or tambourine, playing, singing, and dancing all at the same time; and the *Clown*, or *Jester*. People of rank, in Persia, regularly employ these jesters for their own amusement, ladies employing female jesters or clowns. While the visitors are thus having a gay time, the poor citizens must provide the meat, chicken, rice, tea, and everything for the whole cavalcade. And after she is gone, many of them will be sorely impoverished by her visit. Such are the visits of high rank ladies. On the other hand, the poor women have nothing wherewith to entertain their friends when they call, save the pathetic story of their toils and privations.

CHAPTER X.

MUTUAL RELATIONS OF HUSBAND AND WIFE.

If marriage were always what God intended it to be, there could never be a wreck in life's voyage, never a bitter separation would poison the social organization. The fact is, the further husbands and wives deviate from the principles of God, the darker will be the horizon around them. And the golden gates of their wedded life instead of opening into a paradise of roses and lilies, will open into a field of thorns and thistles, woes and miseries. The ideal relation between husband and wife is nowhere so clearly and forcibly set forth as in the New Testament, by the inspiration of the Spirit. The husband is commanded to love his wife "even as Christ also loved the church." Whenever a husband can measure the length, breadth, height, and depth of the love of Christ to his church, then he will know the measure of love he owes his wife.

This great word "Love" needs to be more strongly emphasized in these days, for many a man has deluded himself and the one with whom he unites in marriage by a sort of love which arises merely from emotional fondness, a merely human and fleshly affection. "Husbands, love your wives" with the most tender, gentle, courteous, and self-sacrificing love, for Christ so loved the church, which is his bride, that he gave himself for it. No man has the right to take a gentle, delicate, and youthful woman for his companion, without first considering earnestly and thoroughly the great duties and responsibilities as recorded in the fifth chapter of Ephesians.

On the other hand, the wives must love their husbands, even as also the church loves her Christ; which is a love of sacred subjection, faithfulness, warm-heartedness, trustfulness and sincerity; for so they are commanded, "Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord." Let every wife listen to the beautiful penpicture by one of the wise, master writers:

"A good wife is heaven's last, best gift to man, his angel and minister of graces innumerable, his gem of many virtues; her voice his sweetest music, her smiles his brightest day, her kiss the guardian of his innocence, her arms the pale of his safety, the balm of his health, the sure balsam of his life; her industry his surest wealth, her economy his safest steward, her lips his faithful counselor, her bosom the softest pillow of his cares, and her prayers the ablest advocate of Heaven's blessing on his head."

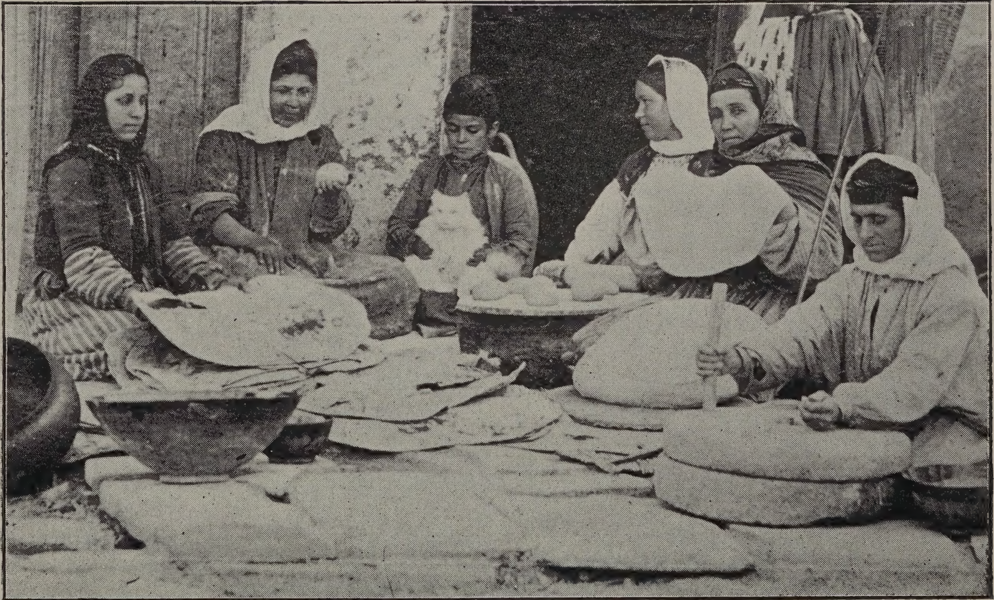
Such are the sacred and solemn duties of every woman who wishes to make an ideal wife. Taking this for our position and the true criterion for our judgment, we will show the relations of husbands and wives as they are under the teachings of the Koran and the tyrannous sceptre of custom in Persia. The relations and obligations of a husband to the woman with whom he has contracted marriage, have not even a similarity to those of the Christian husband. He does not take her as a companion or helpmate, but for convenience and as a slave. Therefore, he feels under no obligation to love or sympathize with her, to teach, help, or to honor her as his own body. And she aspires to nothing, and claims nothing. Simply gives perfect submission to his will on all occasions. Whenever she does not obey his slightest behest, however vicious and cruel, he punishes her severely. This the Koran teaches him to do. It says:

"Those wives whose perverseness ye fear admonish them and remove them into a bedchamber and beat them; but if they submit to you do not seek a way against them."

In the earliest days of Arabia there was a custom of burying girls alive. Islam takes credit to itself for having abolished this cruel practice. But it has instituted, in its stead, one scarcely less horrible for those women who are found guilty of unfaithfulness:

"If any of your women be guilty, produce four witnesses from among you against them, and if they bear witness against them, imprison them in separate apartments till death release them."

In the days of the Prophet, the women were imprisoned till they died by starvation. At the present day, a guilty woman is dragged before an officer, condemned to be tied in a woollen bag, that the soldiers who are to beat her may not see whether their clubs strike eyes, mouth, or limb. When no longer able to endure the sound of her cries the officer retires from the scene. But there is no relenting on the part of the cruel Pherashees whose blows continue unpityingly until their victim is senseless and unable to cry any longer. Most of the husbands, however, prefer to scourge their own wives. Before they marry, they say: "It is important in selecting a wife to take one who will bear the rod with docility." A very slight reason may cause her punishment. I have seen husbands who would kick and strike their wives because they did not move quickly enough when commanded to do something; or when asked to do something absolutely contrary to their wills. It would be somehting remarkable, in that land, to find a single wife who had never in her life suffered punishment. For a husband who does not punish his wife when he thinks she needs it, is looked upon by his associates very much as is one who beats his wife in America. In fact, the word "henpecked" could have no meaning whatever to the Persians. I have heard piteous appeals from Persian women to Christian women, begging that the missionaries would preach to their husbands and induce them to become more kind and merciful. For there is not a single precept in the Koran bidding husbands to love their wives. Poor woman! if she



Nestorian Women Making Bread.

is not married she must bear the reproach and curse of being an old maid. And if she marries she must endure the club of her tyrant.

Moreover, when a husband eats, the wife cannot sit with him and eat at the same table, but must always stand in his presence, with her arms crossed while he eats, ready to render her service to him, like an accomplished slave. And after he has done eating she pours water on her lord's hands, and wipes them with a towel or her own *chader*; then she lights his water pipe, and with a graceful, yet slavish bow, she hands it to him, and while he enjoys it, she serves the children in the same fashion, after which she retires to a respectful distance, her face turned toward the black mud wall, so that her lord may not see her lips moving, and finishes the contents of the meal. When he walks on the street she cannot walk anywhere near him, because it is a reproach for a man to be seen on the street with a woman, and also, because she is so covered by the outdoor costume, he might be accused of walking with a woman who was not his wife. Hence, she never expects any help or protection from him.

When he goes on a journey he does not even tell her good-bye, or consult with her about his trip. And if he should be gone for years would never write her a single letter, nor ask after her health. If anything needs to be attended to he writes to his brothers or father, or a near male relative. Nor does he ever trust his wife with any money for her living; he will ask a friend or relative to give it to her little by little.

When he is in any business trouble or perplexity it will not occur to him to mention the fact to her or to ask her advice. On the contrary, when he talks business with his friends she must not even listen. And if she were in any mental or physical depression she would not dare to mention it to him, for she could only be sure of harsh, rough words instead of loving sympathy. In all these things he is in no sense a husband to her, but only a lord and owner. The natural result of this brutal misconception of woman's place and claims is that the woman accepts the degrading position, and instead of being the companion of her husband as God intended her to be, sharer of his welfare, his joys, sorrows, and cares, and co-partner of his home and children, she only seeks to steal his goods, destroy the happiness of his home and to avenge her wrongs in any way she dares.

Owing to this awful and perverted condition of affairs, the children remain untaught and untrained; the home is like an impure fountain which can cast forth nothing but quarreling and discontent, and society becomes corrupt to the core. While this is the state of the case in general, we are glad to admit that there are a few men who are naturally kindhearted and treat their wives with more consideration and justice. And some wives, who, naturally endowed with talents and tact, become, even in that benighted land, the "power behind the throne;"

some who, in a quiet, unobtrusive, but effectual way, stimulate their husbands to great deeds, just as their sisters do in Europe and America. But, alas, these instances are few and far between. For the sake of childhood and humanity, we wish the number could be increased a thousandfold and their powers developed.

CHAPTER XI.

WOMEN IN THE CHAMBER OF SICKNESS AND DEATH.

It is said that when Catherine Von Bora was lamenting over the loss of her daughter, the dear old Reformer said to her: "Don't take on so, wife; remember this is a hard world for women." If there is any time in the life of a woman in the Orient when this old world is hard for her, it is when she is in the sick room and at the edge of eternity. This is the last period of life, the period upon which the silent shadows of eternity fall, and in which a woman takes her last farewell of the mortal body and flies to the world of immortality. Therefore it is a most important epoch of her life. It may be well, before going on to describe woman's condition in sickness and death, to state briefly the idea of Islamism with regard to woman's immorality.

It has been currently believed that, according to the teachings of Islam, woman has no soul; that she is only a higher species of animal, whose life is ended at death. Three facts have led people to this conclusion.

First, the inferiority of women to men as determined by the Koran. For it is written: "Men are superior to women on account of the qualities with which God has gifted the one above the other, and on account of the outlay men make from their substance for them." The Caliph Omar (not recognized as Caliph by the Mohammedans of Persia) is reported to have said, on one occasion, that "women are worthless creatures and soil men's reputations."

Secondly, the shameful treatment women receive all through Mohammedan lands, the worst from the most orthodox followers of the Prophet.

Thirdly, the Moslem idea of Paradise. Heaven, according to their belief, has seven divisions. It is written: "Who created seven heavens in stories." The seven divisions come in the following order: "The garden of eternity, the abode of peace, the abode of rest, the garden of Eden, the garden of resort, the garden of pleasure (the place of the Most High), and the garden of Paradise."

All believers will be ushered by the angels into these gardens after they are dead. Here, the fruit of the trees, and the shade of the branches, the crystal-like waters, ever flowing from the great rivers, the flesh of fowls, will be in abundance. They will have no headache, their wit will not be dimmed. Around them shall stand eternal youth with goblets and ewers and cups flowing with wine. They will recline on gold-weft couches, while the bright and large-eyed maidens who are like hidden pearls, shall walk before them. These are what are called the damsels of paradise, the seventy-two bright-eyed Houris and Paries, the beauty of whom is beyond human conception. And these will make the other world paradise for the believers. The supposition easily follows that as God has created these Houris to be the wives of the believers in paradise, therefore it must be that their earthly wives perish. Such, however, is not the teaching of the Koran, which plainly states that:

"The men who resign themselves to God, and the women who resign themselves to God; the believing men and the believing women; the devout men and the devout women; the men of truth and the women of truth; the patient men and the patient women; the humble men and the humble women; the men who give alms and the women who give alms; the men who fast and the women who fast; the chaste men and the chaste women; the men and the women who oft remember God, for them has God prepared forgiveness and a rich recompense." And again it is written: "They and their wives on that day shall rest in shady groves." "Enter ye and your wives into paradise delighted," etc.

So that the expectation of each believer is to have his earthly wives and in addition to them the seventy-two Houris when he reaches paradise. However, there is a stern condition for the admittance of any woman into heaven. And that is she must be virtuous, and how can a woman be virtuous? Only by perfect obedience to her husband. For it is written: "The virtuous women are obedient."

Some women who are naturally inclined to be religious, try to bring themselves into perfect subjection and to render the fullest obedience to whatever commands their husbands may give, in order to obtain the privilege of accompanying them to paradise, while others seek to win merit by long pilgrimages to some sacred shrine. If the journey has to be made on a lazy donkey's back it only adds luster to their piety, and renders more sure of their reward. Upon such a tattering foundation and gloomy faith hangs the rayless hope of a Moslem woman. But, outside of these few, there are numberless thousands who make their whole life's journey with scarcely a thought or hope of immorality, being without God *in Christ.*

Now we come to what sickness is to them. We have spoken of their ignorance and awful sins, now we must tell of their sorrows also, for they are the natural outcome of sin.

Christian women, for whom sickness means nothing but tenderness, sympathy, and love, have not the faintest idea what sickness means to their sisters where there is no Christ. And there is a vast volume of facts in this connection which Christian women must meet and modify, even though an acquaintance with them may thrill with horror their enlightened souls.

The woes of sickness in unchristianized lands are beyond the conception of those of other countries. Heathendom, throughout the East, believes that sickness is the result of demons taking possession of a body. Therefore they beat the sick person with their terrible clubs, or roast his body by fire so as to drive out the demon from him. Moslems, on the other hand, torture them by neglect of proper treatment or from want of any treatment at all. So that thousands of women die every year for want of a little medicine and treatment. We can the better understand the situation of a sick woman in Persia or any other Mohammedan country by noting the following points: The prevailing view of Islam in regard to the doctrine of predestination is almost criminal. The Koran teaches it in its most radical form, which leads almost inevitably to fatalism. They believe that whatever comes, including sickness, must be accepted and submitted to, without any human interference, as predestined by God from eternity. This idea, as you see, precludes the use of remedies in sickness.

Again, the woman's position in domestic and social circles makes it quite impossible for any doctor to see or prescribe for her. For those who get sick in the harem there is no help, they must suffer and die, often without even the knowledge of the nearest neighbor. They can only be seen when their cold bodies are being taken out for burial. And if there were any opportunity to consult a physician the result would be of no avail, as the native doctors have not the slightest idea of medical science. In most cases they are more apt to cause injury and death, than help, by their treatment. These physicians rely chiefly on charms, spells, amulets, or unholy incantations. And as the people are extremely ignorant they have implicit faith in them, and would not spare their last cent to pay for them. There is one of these so-called doctors in the neighborhood of my home, of whom I know well. If he should be consulted about a woman or child with fever and chills, he would say, after long deliberation, that a chicken must be brought next day so that he may write a charm with the blood of the chicken. The chicken is killed at his home and the blood used for ink, while the meat will furnish the physician's dinner. The sick person will be ordered to take the writing and burn it, putting the ashes in a cup of water. Then to drink the water and speedily recover. For a person who has no appetite they will prescribe a few loaves of bread put under his pillow at bedtime. Some of these doctors believe that a man's occupation sometimes determines what medicine he must use in order to recover. The sainted Dr. Grant, among his missionary experiences, tells an amusing anecdote of one of these physicians. "He called on a tailor who was ill with intermittent fever. After feeling his pulse, looking wise and mentally invoking the aid of Allah, he left his directions and went his way. He returned next day and found the tailor well enough to be up and around. 'Alhamdulillah,' he exclaimed, 'I see you followed my directions!' 'No,' rejoined the tailor, 'I did not.' 'Then what did you do?' 'Why, nothing in particular, except that I drank a bowl of cabbage soup.' The physician, at once reached the conclusion as to the proper method of treating low fevers. Exit physician, jotting down as an important item, 'Cabbage soup will cure low fevers.' Next he was summoned to the house of an upholsterer and found him very ill with apparently the same symptoms. At once he prescribed 'plenty of cabbage soup.' On returning the next day to see how rapidly his patient was recovering, he was astonished to learn that the man was dead. 'Allah akbar!' he exclaimed, ''twas the will of Allah!' Then he departed, jotting down in his memorandum book this astonishing medical discovery. 'Cabbage soup will cure low fever in a tailor, but will kill an upholsterer.' "

This is a fair sample of the extent of the knowledge of a Persian physician. In some cases a woman may in some way gain the advantage of these prescriptions for their fevers and slight ailments, but in the more serious forms of disease, the doctor, not daring to touch them even to feel their pulse or look at their tongue, they have to stand the pain and suffering to the end without any relief. Especially is this true in the hour of "pain and peril of child birth." They often perish under the barbarous hands of the ignorant midwives.

Also in the time of epidemics such as cholera, smallpox, and other contagious diseases which often bring raging destruction into the country. The men may flee to the mountains and get away from their city homes and danger, but the women and children are left to endure whatever comes. It is pitiful indeed to see them falling prostrate and dying sometimes, without anyone to hand them even so much as a cup of cold water to quench their thirst.

We have already written something on the mutual relations of husbands and wives. It will not be amiss to add a word more in this connection. If there is any time when a wife needs her husband to stand close to her, it is when she is in suffering and pain. And if there is any time when a husband ought to do it is then; to be near her with sympathy, with tender love, with comforting words, and undying devotion. But instead of this, the Moslem husband often sends heartless messages to her, that she has been in bed long enough, she is not sick at all, she is fooling people and wasting time; thus, for the poor woman, adding sorrow of heart to physical pain. With no psalm of comfort to read, no skill of doctor to alleviate suffering, no trained nurses, no hospital or infirmary, no preacher of the gospel to administer the consolations of religion, and no hope for eternity when their sufferings shall end on earth. The pain and dissolution of the bodily organism is dreadful enough, but these are intensified an hundredfold by the terrible agonies of a "guilty conscience forecasting the retributions of the future." Thus the sad and solemn hour comes when the shadows of the king of terrors begin to fall at the door of the melancholy room.

The feet begin to grow cold, the eyesight dim, the weary body beats one last pulse, and the soul is gone. But, alas, not to rest, for there is no rest to them who die without Christ. To them, death is but the beginning of a new misery, as much greater than anything in this world, as eternity is longer than time.

Oh! I wish I could ring into the ear of every Christian woman the awful doom of my unsaved countrywomen! I wish I could pierce every heart and soul with the darts of the love of Christ, so as to arouse a new zeal and interest in sending to them the great salvation of Christ.

BURIAL CEREMONIES.

The Mohammedans have a prescribed ritual for the burial of the dead, which may be elaborated or cut short according as the dead is rich or poor, the essentials being the same in either case. The unfortunate women do not receive nearly so much attention as the men, even in death and burial.

The announcement of death is considered to bring misfortune, therefore few people will volunteer to take the tidings around. The moollah must be informed first, and he will make it public by going up on the top of the mosque and singing in a pecular way, certain passages from the Koran. This is recognized by everybody as the announcement of a death. Then the preparations for burial begin at once, for they do not keep a dead body in the house more than three or four hours, supposing it to be of ill-omen to the family. And it must be that they often bury persons while only unconscious, for in some known instances, when, from necessity they were obliged to keep the body a little longer than usual they have found the person was not dead at all.

It is customary to wash the body under a cover two or three times. The ears, nose, and mouth are then filled with moistened cotton and the body shrouded in a piece of cloth. Coffins are little used, when they are, they make them of rough wood and cover with black calico. The large majority of the dead are buried without. A piece of shawl is thrown over the body from the house to the grave, then it is taken off. The washing and preparatory ceremonies are done by the poor people who expect to receive in return the clothing of the dead. When all is ready for the burial the moollah is sent for to come to the house. Then the body will be taken between four persons, others following to relieve the bearers if they should get tired. There are no hearses in Persia, but it is considered meritorious to assist in these ceremonies. The moollah goes before the procession reading the Koran. Women are not allowed to go to the grave at all. The grave is about four feet deep for a man, while for a woman it must be two or three feet deeper. So that there is no equality between man and woman even in the grave. The body must be laid in such a way that the face can look toward Mecca, the holy shrine of the Moslem, and a pair of crutches are placed under the shoulders to help them up in the day of the resurrection. Then the earth is filled in and a stone put over it. On the eve of the same day, a large fire is kindled over the head, intended to keep off the *hotdar*, an animal which comes at night to dig into the grave and eat the dead body.

In Persia there are no marble monuments over the graves. Sometimes a rude stone may be seen with the name of the person written on it and some passages from the Koran, or sometimes the sign of the man's trade as a sword for a soldier, etc. Very little attention is paid to the burying-grounds. Instead of flowers, roses and trees, there is nothing but trash, a resort for donkeys and other animals. Perhaps one reason of this indifference is that most of the dead are buried temporarily. As soon as the flesh is gone from the bones, they are dug up and carried to the sacred shrines at Kerbela and Meshed, so as to rise in company with the great Imams, holy prophets on the last day.

After the burial the moollah and all the people who participated in the ceremony go back to the house of mourning to offer their condolence and good wishes to the bereaved by repeating over and over again:

"It is the will of Allah!"

"Our lives are in the hands of Allah!"

"May the name of Allah be blessed!" etc.

Each will then be served with a cup of bitter coffee and a kalean or smoking pipe, while another member of the family brings a bottle of rose water to pour over the head of each one.

The number of mourning days as well as the elaborateness of the ceremonial varies greatly. For the poorer classes of women there will be no mourning at all. Husbands consider it unmanly to weep over a dead wife, as another one can easily be procured. But when a man is dead, all the household must mourn for forty or fifty days, and somtimes for the whole year. The special mourning days are on the third day, the seventh, and the fortieth after burial. On these days all the neighbors will gather at the house. Of course this is principally the duty of the women, who are always the last to respond to joy and the last to leave off their mourning. The mourning consists of singing the songs of death, which are very pathetic and hopeless in sentiment. Professional mourners are secured who have trained themselves for such occasions, and the house will be packed and jammed with other women, mostly of those who have had sorrows of their own. The hired singers sit in the midst of them. Some article of clothing or something which belonged to the dead is handed to the leaders who take it into their hands and begin to sing. After each stanza there will be an interval of a few minutes for them all to weep and sob as a chorus. This goes on from morning until dinner time. If the hired mourners grow weary, they throw the garment of the dead man into the lap of some mother who has recently lost a son and she, thus reminded of her own loss, takes up the melancholly refrain and leads, while the others get a little rest.

Dinner is served to them all, and after dinner they begin again and keep it up until night. When, exhausted they depart. Sometimes wives and mothers tear their garments and scratch their faces, pull their hair out and put mud and dust over their bodies, while men keep their shirts unbuttoned at the breast for several days.

The moollah is paid large sums to read the Koran on every Friday night over the grave. Sometimes ten or fifteen of them will be seen in the same graveyard reading aloud and this will be continued for several months. The whole family dresses in black for a year.

Not only in Persia, but in all countries where they are without Christianity, to the women especially, death is a terror and the grave a pit of awful darkness. They sorrow as those who have no hope. It is Christianity alone which throws a soft and peaceful light over the grave. Where Christ is known, instead of head-beating, body-torturing, and hopeless lamentation, songs of hope, peace, and love are sung by the bereaved, to the glory of Him who rules life and death forever

CHAPTER XII.

CHRISTIANITY THE ONLY HOPE FOR WOMEN.

The Christian apologetes need no longer spend their valuable time and fertile brains in vindicating Christianity. The treatment of woman is in itself, sufficient proof of its superiority over any other system. The uncontrovertible facts of history and the strong testimony of experience show clearly that one of the distinguishing features of the so-called moral and philosophic religions of the world is the slavery and degradation of the female sex.

We have already seen it in Mohammedanism—doubtless one of the greatest of these systems. All its claims of morality and inspiration, its revered priesthood and its cornerstone of belief in "Allah," the one and only God, has been of no avail to women. The only thing womanhood has received from Islam is moral corruption, mental stupidity, physical barbarity, social slavery and spiritual deadness.

Leaving the domains of Mohammed we pass to India. The religion of India has been appropriately called "the religion of despair." Hindooism, in its early stages, smiled upon the faces of woman and protected and adored her virtues. But this golden age departed centuries before our Christian era. And in its place a different kind of system has been transplanted which drags woman into the lowest stratum of society, and considers her absolutely incapable, through her own efforts, of rendering acceptable service to the Deity. Even individuality is denied to her. Every hope she has is founded upon her husband, for without him she is soulless. The law says that "a husband, however devoid of good qualities, must constantly be revered as a god by a virtuous wife. She who slights not her lord but keeps her mind, speech, and body devoted to him attains her heavenly mansions." No matter how young they may be left widows, they are thenceforth regarded as dead while living. We hardly wonder that "Hindoo women never smile."

Buddhism, with its great pantheon of gods and goddesses, can reach no higher than to impress upon its votaries the inferiority and slavery of woman as a consequence of her having been the cause of evil being brought upon the whole human race. In the Oracles it is written: "All was subject to man in the beginning. The wise husband raised up a bulwark of walls, but the woman, from an ambitious desire of knowledge demolishes it. Our misery did not come from heaven, she lost the human race."

One of the most intelligent of the Chinese said to a missionary:

"Why do you make Christians of our women?"

"To save their souls," replied the missionary.

"But they have no souls, you can't make Christians of them!"

In the estimation of a Chinaman "ten daughters do not in any case equal the value of one son." Hence there is no hope for woman in the old religions of China and Japan.

Among the classic, cultured Greeks, who have inherited honest fame as the most intellectual people of antiquity, the full dignity of humanity was not accorded to woman. In the fullest sense, mankind consisted only of men. Their conception of woman is personified in the figure of "Pandora" with her box of all human ills.

Plato, when he would picture society as a complete wreck, says:

"Slaves are disobedient to their masters and wives on an equality with their husbands." Socrates utters the pathetic question: "Is there a human being with whom you talk less than with your wife?" And Aristotle characterizes them as an inferior order. These are the sentiments of the great leaders of religious thought, of the doctrines inculcated in great systems which reflect the spirit of purely human organizations. From none of these can there ever be a shadow of comfort for woman. Not one of them has given her the place of equality, as half of the unit of mankind. And not one of them has recognized fully her superior nature, her immortal soul. Crush the soul of a woman, rob her of her divine enthusiasm, destroy her yearnings to be a spiritual solace, and she will wither soon like a sticken tree and sink sullenly into obscurity. Paganism, in ignoring the grandest and the truest in a woman, and in crushing her soul, has extinguished her very life, and shed darkness on all who surround her. For without the amenities of the soul there can never be a lofty friendship and a real society.

Where Christianity arises, with its crimson banner floating through the skies, with its infallible claims of inspiration, its holy and high priesthood of all the saints and its high moral and ethical teachings, it brings a healing balm for all the woes and ills of humanity, and a message of hope and salvation to all the nations, races, and sexes from the divine lips of the crucified *Jesus.*

Of course in the term Christianity we do not include those superstitious and paganized forms of it which also degrade womanhood. Genuine Romanism, for instance, degenerates into a species of polished paganism whose nunneries and convents are like living graves where the lofty sentiments and high aspirations of all who take their vows are buried, and from which no better freedom comes to the female sex than from the shrines of Buddha, the temples of Confucius, and the mosques of Mohammed. We are told that in some parts of Europe and other lands where its tyrannic sceptre rules, women are seen harnessed side by side with a dog, drawing a wagon, while the husband rides, comfortably smoking his pipe.

When we speak of Christianity we mean the pure, sincere, and Christlike system of doctrines and precepts taught in the pages of the gospel. Here only can women hear the silvery words and golden sentences coming out freshly from the lips of the divine man Jesus, whose teachings and thoughts have ever been a benediction to women, purifying their thoughts, molding their character, elevating their honor and saving their souls. In his teachings he ignored the distinctions of rank, race, sex, and simply taught, "Blessed are the poor in spirit," "Blessed are they that mourn," "Blessed are the meek," "Blessed are the merciful."

Not only in what he taught did he raise the highest standard of the equality and mutual dependence of the sexes, but in his deeds and dealings while on earth. One of his most deeply spiritual conversations, recorded in the fourth chapter of John, is the one with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. He was so intent upon saving her precious soul that neither hunger nor the blazing heat of the summer sun could deter him. Even his disciples, still full of the spirit of Judaism, "marvelled" because he spake to the woman. On another occasion when a poor woman was brought to him by a mob of Pharisees that he might condemn her for adultery, he, who had come to save the lost, simply said: "He that is without sin, let him first cast a stone at her." He sympathized with women always. He took an interest in their domestic and social life; in sorrow and bereavement he was first to extend his hand of mercy. He healed them when sick, raised their dear ones from the dead, and when they were wrong he rebuked them gently. Naturally, they loved him reverently and followed him whenever they could, with their tender ministries even unto death and the resurrection morn. And when he ascended up to heaven he commanded his disciples to take his blessed gospel and preach it unto all the world, without distinction of sex or race. So that wherever it has gone, eternal blessings have followed its preaching. To-day Christianity extends its message to all the women of the world as well as to men, a message of hope both for this life and the life to come, a message of love and mercy from Him who died upon the cross to save them from their sins. And as the result of the preaching of this gospel Christianity can boast of its hosts of elevated and redeemed women, whose moral, intellectual, and spiritual beauty is more radiant than the noonday sun. It can also boast of its thousands of distinguished Florence Nightingales, Hanna Mores, Frances Willards, and Clara Bartons; of its heroic female educators, doctors, nurses, lawyers, writers, sovereigns, mothers, sisters, and wives; of its temperance societies, Red Cross societies, Dorcas Societies, sewing societies, home and foreign mission societies, all well organized and well managed in their Herculean crusade against sin and ungodliness; whose representatives are the first to place the cup of cold water to the parched lips of the dying soldier upon the battlefield, the first by the bedside of dying patients in the hospitals, bearing thither flowers and words of cheer, and first in feeding the hungry in the time of famine and starvation. Thanks be to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for Christian womanhood.

"Woman, why weepest thou?
No sound! but women, veiled and speechless throng
And look their wordless woe with haunting eyes,
Far down, unseen, unsearched, as one who lies
In unsearched, hidden chasms, they die. How strong
The voice, that cries along th'abyss of heathen wrong!
Woman, why weepest thou?

"Woman, why weepest thou?
Thy help is near! Thy Christ has heard the sound
Of world-wide tears! His heralds swift proclaim
Surcease of weeping through his mighty name.
Woman, he died, and on the cross was bound
To lift thee by unfathomed love from depths profound!
Woman, why weepest thou?"

CHAPTER XIII.

THE NON-MOHAMMEDAN WOMEN OF PERSIA.

The population of Persia is supposed to be about 9,000,000. These all belong to the faith of Islam with the exception of a little over 100,000, who are made up of Jews, Guebres, Armenians, and Nestorians. These non-Mohammedan races, although in many respects they have conformed themselves to the customs and habits of their Moslem neighbors and rulers, have yet retained many of their race peculiarities, as well as their religious beliefs and ceremonies.

The Jews number about 5,000. They are settled in about fifty cities throughout the country. The essentials of their religion are of course the same as in other parts of the world. But in recent years many of them have become skeptical and corrupt. Their matrimonial laws are now almost the same as those of Islam. They even practice polygamy and divorce at pleasure. Their women have become proportionately degraded and ignorant. They have somewhat more of freedom of association at home, and are not quite so closely veiled when they go out, but altogether they present a picture no less dark than the Moslems.

The Guebres, or "infidels," as they are called by their

Armenian Lady.

Mohammedan conquerors, are the Fire Worshipers, the followers of Zardosht, Zoroaster. They represent the remnant of the most ancient inhabitants of Persia. Most of them were killed or driven from the country by the Arabian invaders. Many of them fled to India where they are now known as Parsees. There are not more than 5,000 left in Persia, who live in the cities of Yezd and vicinity, in Teheran, and in Kerman. They are totally different from all the other inhabitants of the country and have kept their peculiar customs and habits nearly unchanged. Their religion forbids any association with those of other religions and owing to this exclusiveness very little is known of their social life though they are said to be truthful and honest. Their religion strongly recommends marriage, and for the reason that both men and women if married will be more likely to be happy and to lead a religious and virtuous life. Their Scriptures picture the unmarried life as a fertile tract of land uncultivated and overgrown with thorns and thistles: and married life as this same tract of land carefully cultivated and giving beauty, happiness, nourishment, and grace to all the world about it. The girls are married at the age of fifteen by their parents, they themselves have no freedom of choice. They are forbidden to marry their daughters to a man who is not a Zoroastrian in his religious belief. So great is the stress laid upon marriage that it is considered a meritorious act for a rich man to endow a poor couple and thus enable them to marry. They have a very high standard of qualifications, both for husband and wife, but, of course with the wife, the greatest of these is obedience to her husband. They go so far as to assert that disobedience will be punished as a great sin after death. They have also very particular sanitary regulations, especially as regards cleanliness.

The Armenians belong to the Indo-Germanic family of races, and number from 50,000 to 60,000. With the exception of the few who are merchants in the cities, the majority of them are peasants and live in small villages throughout the country. Their religion is the Christian religion, but in a ritualistic and superstitious form, similar to the Greek religion.

The Armenian women as a class are ignorant and uneducated. Their features are regular and handsome, and they are industrious and chaste. Their costume differs from that of the Moslem women, consisting of long flowing skirts both indoor and out, and always with the head closely wrapt even within doors. They are married by their parents at the age of twelve or fifteen. Their marriage and betrothal ceremonies vary considerably from those of the Mohammedans both being performed by the priest.

Among the Armenians, as among nearly all Orientals, the wife is considered the inferior of her husband in every respect. They are not permitted to talk loudly or freely in the presence of men. The Yeshmak being almost as thick and binding as among the Moslems. Those of them whom have not been reached by the Protestant missionaries are very low in the moral scale. Outbreaking profanity is often heard from them. Although believing in the name of Jesus Christ and in the Bible, yet as they depend entirely on the priest to read and interpret the Bible for them, their understanding is sadly darkened and their ideas paganish. It might truly be said of them, when unevangelized: "They have a name to live while they are dead."

The Nestorians.—As this people have been so remarkable in the past as a missionary church and as the history of modern missions in Persia is so closely connected with them, we will give a fuller account of them than of the other non-Mohammedan races.

The Nestorians number altogether about 150,000, 30,000 of whom have been living in Oroomiah, Persia, for many centuries, while the rest are scattered through the rugged mountains of Kurdistan. They are descendants of the ancient Arameans, who lived in Aram at the time of Jacob's sojourning there with Laban. The same country was called by the Greeks, at a later period, Syria. It is claimed that they have been Christians since the time of the apostles. The Bible was written in Syriac, their language, during the latter part of the second century. They received their name, which is purely ecclesiastical, from Nestorious, a bishop of Constantinople, who was condemned as a heretic by the

Council of Ephesus (A.D. 430), for advocating the doctrine of the two natures and two persons of Christ. And all who followed him were, at a later period, called by their papist enemies "Nestorians" as a term of reproach. For a period of at least twelve hundred years they were a strong missionary force in the East. Their missionaries, as early as the fourth century, were found in China. They went also to India, Arabia, and Tartary, spreading Christianity in obedience to the Master's command. Their schools of learning and theological training were famous. They represented the true evangelical spirit.

But this Golden Age has past hundreds of years ago, and a dark epoch followed. Their self-sacrifice and devotion to the Master's cause stood the test of many and bitter persecutions under heathen, Parsees, and later Mohammedan sovereigns. But under the Tartars they were well-nigh exterminated. Their books and Bibles were burned, their schools and churches destroyed, and thousands were put to the sword. The history of their martyrs is most thrilling and inspiring. Women as well as men gave themselves to the executioner's knife, singing songs of Zion. One of the most pathetic incidents found in their manuscripts is the story of Shmooni and her seven sons, who were martyred many centuries ago, for the sake of their religion.

Tradition says that the heathen king, whose subjects they were, issued an edict that no one in his teritory should worship the God of the Christians. Any one doing so should suffer death. The mother's heart was filled with terror when she heard the proclamation of the edict, for she had taught her children from their earliest years to trust and pray to God, and like Daniel they could not give up their daily worship. Summoned by the king, they were arranged before him according to their ages. The eldest brother was then commanded to do something in the presence of the king and courtiers, which all knew to be contrary to the precepts of his religion. But he bravely replied: "O king, we are ready to die but cannot transgress our law." The sovereign immediately ordered that he first have his tongue cut out and then be put to death. And while he was being thus tortured, the mother and brothers were pleading and praying that he might have courage to die a martyr's death.

The second brother in turn being tortured cried out: "O king, thou hast power to cut me off from this temporal life, but I have a King who will crown me with eternal glory!" So saying he was burned at the stake.

The third, the fourth, the fifth, and the sixth were tortured and put to death in the presence of their mother, who all the while prayed for them, picturing to them the glories of heaven and begging each one rather to die than to live unfaithful to God.

The youngest one was left. He was a mere child, so young and tender and pure that the king endeavored to persuade him to deny his religion, offering him great rewards if he would do so. The poor mother casting herself at feet of the child, cried: "My son, my son, be merciful to me! From infancy thou hast been taught the *truth*, and now if thou forsake the God of thy mother thou wilt send her down to the grave in misery for her unfaithful son! See, thy brothers have died for the faith and have received their crown of glory, and thou hast witnessed their victory. The gates af heaven are opened, the angels are waiting to welcome you in, be brave! be true!" And the child exclaimed: "I am ready to die! I am ready to die!" And he too was burned to death.

Last of all, the mother, having beheld the torture, death, and victory of her seven sons, was herself put to death. Thus mother and sons sealed their testimony with their blood and passed into glory.

There is to-day, about six miles southwest of the city of Oroomiah, upon the slope of a mountain, a little mud hut, constructed after the manner of the Orientals, and surrounded by seven willow trees of unknown age. The place has for centuries been called, "Bnai-Shmooni," Shmooni and her sons.

Had we space we could tell many such pathetic stories of noble Christian women of this Christian nation, whose religious enthusiasm and fervor were in no less degree thrilling than that of Saint Theresa of Spain, and heroic martyrdom than that of the martyred maiden of Scotland. It is an unfortunate fact that whenever a body of Christians drift away from the true principles of the gospel of Christ, their women are the first to suffer. Men quickly assume the role of tyrants and women of slaves.

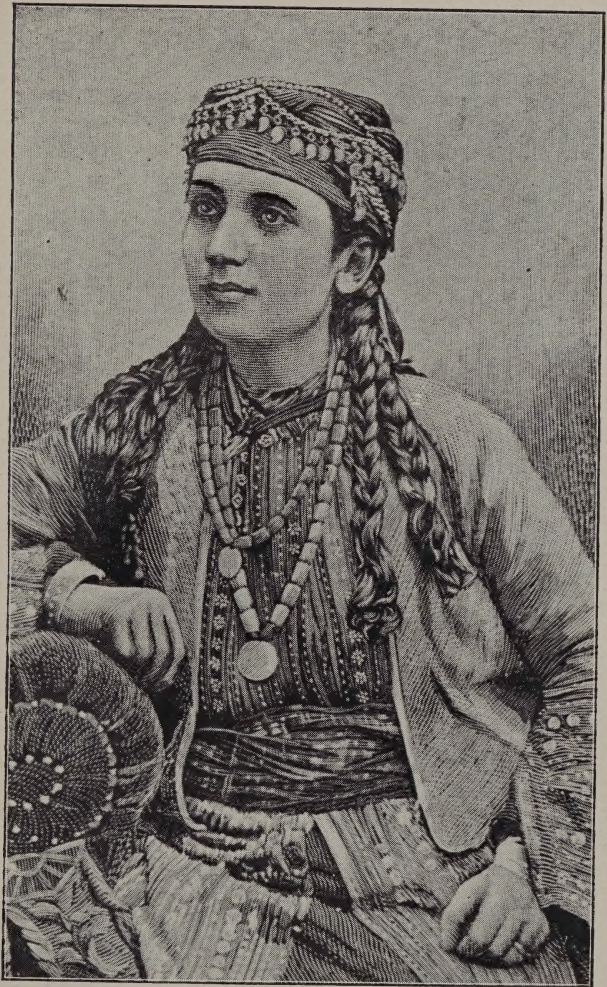
At the time the Nestorians were first visited by the missionaries, they had sunk into a deplorable chaos of ignorance. The women, particularly, were stupid and neglected, like their Mohammedan neighbors. Just one woman among the 150,000 Nestorians, and that one the sister of the Patriarch, had been taught to read. Physically they were as strong as giantesses because of the hard labor they had been compelled to do, and this had by no means improved their personal appearance. Socially, though not so strictly secluded as the Mohammedan women, they were but little more free, either at home or elsewhere. They also bore the ignoble yoke of the "Yeshmak." Although polygamy was never practiced nor divorce permitted, yet wife-beating and unhappy family life were nothing unusual. The husband never thought of sitting at the table with his wife or walking on the street with her any more than if they had been Moslems. Stealing, lying, and profanity were matters of every day practice, among women as well as men, and they did not seem to realize at all the blackness of such crimes. However low in many respects they had gotten, yet chastity has ever been the chiefest of virtues among them, of which they can well be proud.

As far as their religion was concerned, they loved the name of Christ as a sacred word, and kissed the Bible with solemn reverence as the sacred book of God whenever the opportunity offered, yet these opportunities were exceedingly rare, as there were only three Bibles among the Persian Nestorians, and these were kept wrapped in silk coverings and regarded with such superstitious reverence that they were almost afraid to let anybody, much less a woman, touch them. These Bibles were in ancient Syriac, almost as different from the vernacular or spoken language of the people as ancient from modern Greek.

The reading in their churches was mostly from the Liturgy, the writings of the "Fathers," but the women were not even allowed to go to church and hear these. And even that was read by the priests in the unfamiliar tongue of their ancestors. Feasting and fasting, prayers to the saints and pilgrimages to distant churches named for the dead saints, took the place of true repentance for sin and faith in God's forgiving love through the precious blood of the Savior. Such was the sad, sad condition of these once noble women of a noble church.

"Oh! how changed from days of old!
All is dross that once was gold!"

We are exceedingly sorry that we cannot speak at greater length of the causes and consequences of this



Mrs. Khnan-Eshoo Abraham.
In Mountain Nestorian Costume.

ignorance and superstition which overshadowed the whole race. We trust to be able to do so at another time and place. What has been said will be sufficient to give the reader a fair idea of the degradation of these women before the dawn of the morning, when the gospel was brought anew to them by the Christian missionaries from America.

The Yezidees, "Devil Worshipers."—Although these people do not live directly in Persia, yet because they are so close to it, and next door neighbors of the Nestorians, we will make a few remarks about them:

They number about 200,000 souls scattered over a belt of territory three hundred miles wide; but the mass of them are to be found in the mountains of Northern and Central Kurdistan, and among the Sinjar hills of Northern Mesopotamia.

Their linial origin is wrapt in obscurity; some claim that they are descendants of the "ten lost tribes," while others trace them to Arabian origin. Their religion is a very peculiar one. While they believe in God as the supreme deity, and as the first cause of all things, yet they have nothing to do with Him either in the way of worship or service. They believe in one Melik Taoos, "King Peacock," who is eternal, an emanation from God, and who became incarnate as Lucifer, and deceived Adam and Eve as Satan. They worship him through bronze images of peacocks and other birds, with but one eye. They believe also in one Sheikh Aadi, who is to them as Christ is to the Christians and Mohammed to the Moslems. He is supposed to have been descended from the divine nature, or at least is so honored of God, that whatever Sheikh Aadi wills comes to pass. Their holy book is El Jilweh, i. e., "The Revelation," which was written by Sheikh Aadi in Arabic. The original is the only copy in existence which is guarded at Shiekh Aadi's tomb with great care.

Their social customs are peculiar to themselves. Men and women have more freedom of association in their great feasts; women are permitted to dance and sing with men. The law allows every man to marry not more than six wives; the girl has no freedom to choose her husband. She is virtually sold by the parents like cattle or land. If any girl does not prefer to get married, she can stay single at her father's home by paying him every year a sum of money which she must earn by hard labor. The marriage ceremonies are simple but accompanied with great feasting. The climax of the wedding is reached as soon as the bride and groom have eaten together a loaf of bread made at the home of the Sheikh and brought to them by him. Liquor is freely used by both men and women at the wedding feast. It is the custom when the groom meets his bride for him first to throw at her a stone, and she has to bow her head to him as a sign of absolute subjection to his authority. Then he will take a cake of bread and put it over her head as a sign of her being a merciful woman to the poor and afflicted. It is not legal to consummate marriage during the month of April, that month being considered by them a holy month, nor on any Wednesday or Friday through the year. Women are treated almost like animals, without any rights or respect; their idea of immortality is very degrading. They believe in the transmigration of souls. Altogether they represent a very dark picture. No mission work has ever been attempted among them.

CHAPTER XIV.

PERSIAN WOMEN AND CHRISTIAN MISSIONS.

The gospel of Christ is God's only remedy for sin, and missions to the heathen are the strongest evidence of God's love to mankind. We have spoken of the degradation and wretchedness of Persian women, as imposed upon them by the sceptre of custom and religion. Now we come to deal with the remedy.

One great mistake of the Church of Christ in past centuries has been in spending too much of her strength and energies in proving the doctrines of the Church. Even a Luther and a Calvin were content to show what Christianity is; the Church of the nineteenth century would fain show what it can do. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." As long as this is the aspiration and the motto of the Church it shall triumph over the world.

Before we speak of what the gospel has done for the women of Persia in the last century, it would perhaps be best to sketch in a general way the earlier missionaries in Persia. The first Protestant missionaries who bore the banner of the cross to modern Persia, were two Moravian preachers, Hocker and Rueffer, in 1747. They traveled through the eastern and southeastern parts of Persia; were three times attacked by the ruthless Kurds and robbed of everything they had. Deeming the work hopeless at that time, they made their way back via Egypt.

In 1811 Henry Martyn made his memorable tour through Persia, and gave noble testimony for Christ at several great centers, and in the presence of fanatical priests of the Moslem faith. Dying early, he left as his legacy, the translation of the New Testament and Psalms into Persian.

In 1829 Dr. C. G. Pfander, a German, was sent by the Basle Missionary Society and sojourned for awhile in the country. In 1833 he was joined by Rev. Frederick Haas from the same society. Shortly after the arrival of the latter, they were driven from the country by the intolerant government, leaving behind "Balance of Truth," a masterly work written by the former on the comparative evidences of Mohammedanism and Christianity. This tract is still working in a silent way among some classes of Persians.

In 1823 Dr. W. Glen, a missionary under the venerable Scottish Missionary Society, settled with a few associates at Karaso, Russia, on the North side of the Caucasus mountains. Here Mohammed Ali, the son of a Persian judge, heard them preach, was converted, and baptized, thus becoming the first fruits of the kingdom among the Mohammedans. While here Dr. Glen translated the Old Testament into Persian, which was completed in 1847. In 1838 he crossed the mountains and entered into Persia. After a short period of labor he returned to Scotland to superintend the publication of his own translation and that of Henry Martyn. At the age of seventy years he returned again to Persia to circulate these publications.

In 1869 Robert Bruce, an Englishman, spent several months in Teheran, and from there went to Ispahan where he labored for some years. In 1876 Ispahan became a permanent station under the "Church Missionary Society."

But the first really permanent work was begun in 1835 when Rev. Justin Perkins and Ashel Grant, M.D., under the "American Board," established a station in Oroomiah for the Nestorian people.

These were soon reinforced by such illustrious men as Stoddard, Stocking, Wright, Ray, Coan, Cochran, Holliday, Shedd, and Labaree, together with the no less illustrious Misses Fiske and Rice, etc., and the reformatory work was begun in an aggressive manner. The first school for boys was opened in a cellar in January, 1836, with seven small, dirty, and ragged boys, who had to be paid each day to come and study. This school, later on, developed into Oroomiah College.

In 1837 the first printing press was sent to the mission by the board. It was soon set in operation and is still going on with marvelous enterprise, printing for circulation both religious and educational literature.

In 1869 plans were made for the enlargement of the mission, which was effected by changing its name from the "Mission of the Nestorians" to the "Mission to Persia." In 1871 it was transferred from the "American Board" to the "Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions."

In 1872 Rev. James Bassett was sent to Teheran, the capital, where he opened a new station for the Armenians, Jews, and Moslems. In 1873 Tabriz was occupied and made a station. In 1881, Hamadan, in 1885 Salmas, in 1892 Mosul in Assyria. In all these stations the work is done principally among the non-Mohammedan element, such as Nestorians, Armenians, and Jews. But indirectly, efforts have been made to extend the gospel message to the Mohammedans also. The results, although not very apparent, give hope for a future harvest.

The general statistics of the year 1896 show as the result of the work about 120 congregations, an average attendance of 6,500, and in Sabbath schools about 4,000, and a company of about 2,470 communicants, and a host of something like 3,500 scholars, both boys and girls, in the schools, for which we praise the Lord.

WOMAN'S WORK FOR WOMAN IN PERSIA.

We will turn our attention now to that particular branch of the missionary work which is in most direct connection with the women of Persia. This I consider the most important for four reasons: First, because their number is far greater than that of the men. Second, because their condition is more degraded and pitiable. Third, because their influence, either for good or evil, is stronger. As it is said, "The factor that most universally molds society is woman; the boy is father of the man, but the woman is mother of the boy." In enlightening women, the missions enlighten not only women but men, children and society. I agree fully with the statement made by an intelligent Hindoo on this point: "Reach the hearts of the women of our country and you will soon get at the heads of the men." The future of the Orient depends largely upon what missions will do for its women. Fourth, because its difficulties are greater. It is natural that any great work should have great difficulties. One who has not experienced them can hardly appreciate those of a missionary, especially in trying to reach the women and establish schools for them in these Eastern countries.

The very idea of educating women was hateful and distasteful, not only to men but to the women themselves. When a lady missionary would ask a woman if she wanted to be taught to read, she would simply shrug her shoulders and reply: "I am a woman!" Again, the custom of early betrothal and marriage was greatly against it. Even the Nestorian women, among whom the mission work began, were betrothed at the age of twelve, after which it was impossible for them to go to

MISS FIDELIA FISKE.

school. For, from that time on they were the handmaids and servants of the home. They had to do all the work. And as the majority of the people were poor and could not afford servants, sending their daughters, or permitting their women to go, to the missionaries for instruction was out of the question. Moreover, the people looked upon the missionaries as foreigners, and had no confidence in them. The more ignorant of them suspected them of some kind of magic, and believed that they would put the girls into balloons and fly them over to their own country, where parents could get them back no more. Add to these the lack of books and all other means for instruction, and you may form some idea of the obstacles which beset the earliest efforts to educate and Christianize the women of Persia.

In spite of all these barriers, however, the work was undertaken. Noble Mrs. Grant, with her scholarly mind, her great heart, and her enormous zeal, although she was suffering from the effects of the climate and had her hands full of domestic duties, was busy planning for the opening of a school exclusively for girls, which she felt sure would be the only way to elevate and lift up the women from the awful pit into which they had sunk. On March 12, 1838, the first girls' day school was opened, with only four pupils. Mrs. Grant succeeded in making such a fine impression, both upon parents and scholars, that within two weeks the number of pupils was doubled, and by June 19 she had four times as many as when she began. But the sacred work, commenced under so great encouragement, was to suffer sorely in the death of Mrs. Grant, which took place on the 14th of January, 1839.

After her death the school was continued under the charge of Mr. Holliday. And then passed into the hands of Dr. Wright. As these gentlemen had other urgent duties in connection with the mission, and very little time to devote to the girls' school, it dragged out a half-dead existence, until Miss Fidelia Fiske, of Shelburne, Mass., arrived in Oroomiah, June 14, 1843. She soon realized that to elevate womanhood she must begin with girlhood. The first Syriac sentence she learned was to beg for girls: "Give me your daughters!" Looking into the situation, she at once determined, though with great anxiety, to make the school a boarding school, in which case the girls would be separated from the vice and corruption of home and society life, and would be under the direct and continuous good influences of the school. But the difficulties and discouragements in the way of such a plan were immense. Few people believed it could ever materialize. Even Priest Abraham, one of the pious men who had been under missionary influence for many years, said: "I cannot bear the reproach of having my daughter live with you." But Miss Fiske, ever hopeful, and encouraged by Mar Yohannan, who said to her: "You get ready and I find girls," commenced the simple preparations for the undertaking.

When the day came for the school to be opened there was not a single pupil present. But before very long, while she was sitting at her window, she saw Mar Yohannon coming in with two little girls, seven and ten years old. The honorable Bishop placed the hands of the little girls in hers and said in his broken English: "They be your daughters, no man take them from your hand."

Although the little things were dirty and ungainly in appearance, the missionary rejoiced greatly over them, and in a few days the number was increased to six. The work began by cleansing the bodies and garments of the poor creatures, for this is the first step toward mental and moral development. Such were the initial circumstances of woman's work for woman in Persia.

CHAPTER XV.

THE AGGRESSIVE DEVELOPMENT.

The little school, begun under such discouraging circumstances, was not to be confined to its original narrow limits. A great future awaited it. For the first year after its opening, from the winter of 1843-44, the mission was obliged to pay the pupils for going to school, as their parents were too poor and too indifferent to do anything to aid them. About 25 cents a week was appropriated for the needs of the day scholars, while the boarders had their beds besides. By the next winter the students were asked to pay for their bread. So great was Miss Fiske's influence, both over the girls and their parents, that they began to be really anxious to do anything they could to secure the advantages of the school. For instance, a widow brought her only bed to the school for the use of her daughter, saying: "I can sleep on the rush mat if you will only receive her into the school." In a few years they were charged a little tuition also. Thus they were being taught gradually to help themselves.

The number of the pupils increased very rapidly. In 1844 they had enrolled twenty-six, and in 1845 the number had gone up to forty. The need for other teachers and helpers was greatly felt. In November, 1847, Miss Mary Susan Rice, sent by the board, arrived in Oroomiah to join Miss Fiske in her labors. From that time until the year 1858, like two angels of mercy, these two devoted women worked together in the same cause. When Miss Fiske returned to America, her mantle was thrown upon Miss Rice, who took the absolute care of the Seminary for eleven years more.

While Misses Fiske and Rice held the principalship of the school, the native teachers who had been educated in the male seminary, rendered most valuable service, both in teaching and in looking after the temporal affairs of the school. One of these was Yonan, now known as Malek Yonan, the father of the writer, who was a teacher from 1847 to 1860. Dr. Stocking and Dr. Wright also gave assistance as needed.

The course of study was marvelously developed within a few years. Miss Fiske had from the beginning determined to make it as nearly similar as possible to that of Mount Holyoke Seminary, from which she was a graduate. Of course this could not be done at once, as the girls were so utterly untrained and untaught before coming to the school. Besides, there were no books to supply the need. But in the course of time it equaled if it did not surpass most schools of its kind. The Bible was the main study in the course, for which both teachers and scholars seemed to have a sacred passion. Besides the Bible, they were taught reading, in both modern and ancient Syriac, writing, singing, composition, grammar, geography, arithmetic, and theology, with oral instruction in physiology, chemistry, natural philosophy, and astronomy. The teachers were also accustomed to translate orally to them such volumes as Paradise Lost, Course of Time, Edwards' History of Redemption, Pike's Persuasions to Early Piety, etc.

The course of instruction was so well arranged that it stimulated their minds, elevated their morals, and developed their piety.

But such a course of study for those people and circumstances, might have done more harm than good, if it had not been accompanied by domestic training. The teachers saw clearly that the only hope of transforming their homes as they wished to do was to teach the girls system and order, to train them in hand, as well as brain work. The experiment was at once made, and although with poor success in the beginning, at the last they could entrust almost the whole domestic management of the school to the pupils.

The most remarkable feature of the school was its rapid development in the religious life of its pupils. It was the special desire of the principals that it should be so, and particular attention was given to prayer, meditation, and devotional Bible study. Early in the morning, soon after rising, a bell was rung and for twenty minutes not a sound could be heard in all the house, for all the girls were engaged in silent devotion. At the end of that time another bell would ring to call the girls into one room for family prayer. The Scriptures were read and expounded briefly and prayers were offered. At a quarter before nine o'clock the school was opened with prayer and Scripture reading, and again at bed time the bell rang for prayer.

Miss Fiske in giving a programme of a Sabbath in the school, thus writes to a friend in December, 1855, just twelve years after the beginning of the school: "The first bell, Sabbath morning, is at half past five, when all rise and dress for the day. Morning prayers are at half past six; then comes breakfast, and, our few morning duties being done, the girls retire to study their Sunday schools lessons, and sometimes ask to meet together for prayer. At half past nine, we attend Syriac service in the chapel. The Sabbath school follows that, numbering now about 200 pupils. About two-thirds of our scholars are teachers in it, and it is a good preparation for teaching in their homes. Those who do not teach form a class. We then go home to lunch, flavored with pleasant remembrances and familiar explanations of the morning service. The afternoon service commences at two o'clock, and our Bible lessons an hour before supper. At supper all are allowed to ask Bible questions, and before leaving the table we have evening prayers."

Thus the holy day is ended. Besides these, there is a weekly prayer meeting on Tuesday evening, a lecture on Friday afternoon, and on Wednesday, as well as Sabbath evening, the school meets in two divisions for prayer. It may probably seem to some that the superintendents of the school carried to an extreme the religious exercises, and ran some risk of making them a burden rather than a pleasure. But it did not have that effect—quite the contrary. The principal and teachers, as well as the scholars, loved their religious meetings dearly and were not willing to miss any one of them. "I was glad when they said unto me let us go into the house of the Lord!"

Miss Fiske continued the principal and teacher of the school until July, 1858, when she returned to America, leaving it in care of her associate, Miss Rice, until 1869, other missionary ladies and the faithful native assistants rendering valuable service, at times. Miss Rice was succeeded in 1869 by Miss Jennie Dean, who had helped some the previous year while learning the language. In 1875, and for many years after, Miss Mary K. Van Duzee was associated with Miss Dean. In 1891 Misses Medbry and Russell took charge of the seminary and are still there. Each succeeding teacher and principal has aimed with great earnestness to raise the standard of its literary course. Of late years a preparatory department has been added, conducted to some extent according to the kindergarten system. The reports of December, 1896, show a full attendance of about 200, of whom 75 are boarders, and 21 have come from the mountains. A great advance has also been made in the financial department. Most of the pupils pay full board and have all the care needed for their rooms. They also pay part of their tuition.

From all we can hear, the young ladies at present in control of the school are doing an excellent work, and are striving to make the school one of the highest grade and complete in all its branches. But we have sometimes feared that the ambition for a high literary standard, which is so much needed, might lessen the zeal for Christian training, and thus the religious fervor, for which in early years it was so remarkable, suffer decrease.

Most valuable assistance has been contributed by the native helpers, from the beginning to the present day, in teaching, superintending, and in living among the students. Without them the missionaries could not have accomplished nearly so much. Some of them have been efficient helpers for many successive years. Deacon Siyad taught for over twenty-five years, Malek Yonan for thirteen years, and Hosheboo for twenty years. There have been others, such as Esli, Rachel, etc., who have taught a few years each.

When Mar Yohannon, that man of God, returned to Persia after a visit to America in 1843, he was asked by the Mohammedan governor of Oroomiah who could speak a little English:

"What are the wonders of America?"

The Bishop replied:

"The blind they do see, the deaf they do hear, and the women they do read; they be not beasts."

Having visited Mount Holyoke Seminary he often said:

"When I see such a school here, I die!" (Meaning that then he would be ready to die.)

If this noble Nestorian were living to-day to see the school which started with the two little ragged girls he brought, as it is now, he would assuredly turn his face toward heaven and praise God for the transforming power of the gospel, and be able to repeat for his own country:

"And the women they do read; they be not beasts!"

THE VILLAGE SCHOOLS.

There are 30,000 Nestorians who live in the plain of Oroomiah. Of these about 1,500 souls dwell in the city of Oroomiah; the rest are scattered among the small villages over the plain. The seminary has been located in the city. Besides the town girls who attended it, many from the villages came. But that was too slow a way to reach the masses that were in darkest ignorance. Plans were made, soon after the establishment of the Female Seminary, to open schools in the villages, both for boys and girls. At first the graduates of the Male Seminary did the teaching. Later, it was left almost entirely to the graduates of the Female Seminary. In the begininng the work was beset with difficulties but it was quickly on its feet. As early as 1840 the number of girls in attendance at the village schools was 40. In two years it had gone up to 128. In 1850 it was 166, and in 1853, 365.

That the reader may get some idea of the work done through these schools, we will give an account of the examination of a school at Geog-Tapa (the home of the writer), in the year 1854, as given in "Woman and Her Savior in Persia:"

"Thursday, June 1st, was a great day in Geog-Tapa. The forenoon was devoted to the examination of a girls' school, taught by Hanee and Nargis, graduates of the preceding year (of the seminary), and both living in the village. As it was a feast day, a large number were present from neighboring villages. At nine o'clock the examination commenced in the spacious church, which was crowded, the congregation numbering about 600 in all. The fifty pupils occupied the middle of the church. The studies in which they were examined were ancient and modern Syriac, geography, arithmetic, both Scripture and secular history, reading, and spelling. And in all of them the students did credit both to themselves and to their teachers. The singing that day especially pleased the parents, many of whom exclaimed with wonder: 'Our daughters can learn as well as our sons!' Miss Fiske rejoiced to see her children's children, in the pupils of her own first pupil, who gracefully managed her little flock with an easy control."

The teachers not only taught them to read, but to pray and to love Jesus. They were in the habit of praying with one of their pupils alone each day, besides opening the school with prayer. These village schools, primarily for the purpose of preparing the pupils for entering the seminary, also served a good purpose in training the native teachers for better usefulness in Sunday schools and religious work among the women.

The number of the schools has increased now to something like forty, and some of them are self-supporting. Others receive help. The course of study also has advanced to higher grades, and in many respects these schools are fountians of great blessing to homes and country.

CHAPTER XVI.

EVANGELICAL WORK AMONG WOMEN.

The teachers of the seminary, from its early days, made every effort to reach the mothers of the pupils and also other women. This was chiefly to be done by getting them to attend the meetings. But the women were very unwilling to attend the services with men, as they had never done so before. The first attempt was made by Miss Fiske in 1844 in one of the rooms of the seminary. At the first meeting there were only five who, in the face of prejudice and bashfulness could make up their minds to listen to the gospel *in company with men.* The number soon increased to forty. And on the third Sabbath the first fruit of the public services was seen. One of the women, noted for her perverseness and high temper, was brought to such conviction that she fell down upon the ground as meek as a lamb, with confession of her many sins.

This beginning in the seminary having proved a success, the teachers, both missionaries and natives, after teaching six days would go out on Saturday to spend the Sabbath in the villages around, teaching and preaching the way to the kingdom of Christ. The first village they visited was Geog-Tapa, which has been ever since the foremost in Christian activity.

Wherever Miss Fiske went she had crowds of women around her, most of whom, of course, went at first merely out of curiosity. Her method of teaching was simple. She would always begin by requesting silence which it usually took some time to secure. Then she would ask a few questions such as these: "Who was the first man?" "Who was the first woman?" etc. After a thorough drill on two or three of these Bible questions she would speak a few practical words and after several prayers the meeting would be dismissed.

On one occasion, when Miss Fiske had been on a constant strain all through the week, she went on Saturday to Geog-Tapa to spend the Sabbath. Sabbath morning, after conducting a prayer meeting, and teaching the Sabbath school, she attended the preaching service with the women.

As she sat on the earthen floor with no support for her back she felt utterly exhausted. A Christlike Nestorian woman sitting close behind her, noticed how very tired she was and bade her lean against her. At first Miss Fiske declined. But the kindhearted woman putting her strong arm around her drew her back and said: "If you love me, lean hard!" Miss Fiske yielded and was much refreshed. In this little incident the missionary heard the Master's voice speaking to her, and embodied the message in the following beautiful lines:

"Child of my love, lean hard;
And let *me* feel the *pressure* of thy care.
I know thy burden, child; I shaped it,
Poised it in mine *own* hand—made no proportion
Of its *weight* to thine unaided strength;
For even as I laid it on, I said,
I shall be near; and while she leans on *me*,
This burden shall be mine, not hers.
So shall I keep my child in the circling arms
Of mine own love. Here lay it down, nor fear
To impose it on a shoulder which upholds
The government of worlds. Yet closer come—
Thou art not near enough; I would embrace thy care,
So I might feel my child *reposing* on my breast.
Thou lovest me? I know it. Doubt not then,
But *loving* me, *lean hard*."

The interest increased continually. All were eager to learn. *The Sunday school was soon opened to meet the demands of the anxious men and women, some of whom were over fifty years of age. Each scholar was given a spelling book, and a Testament was promised to anyone who would learn to read. It was not long before numbers of them had their Testaments. The work went on from village to village, the interest growing stronger and stronger. In 1850 when Miss Rice visited one of these villages, there were three hundred women who listened anxiously to her message. So great was the earnestness that women carried their Bibles to the cotton fields and vineyards, so that they might read a passage in any moment's opportunity.

---

* My father has the honor of being the first man to organize the Sunday schools in Persia.

In 1854 my father had a class in the Sunday school of Geog-Tapa that numbered from forty to sixty women, most of whom were over fifty years of age. He taught them the story of the Old Testament from the creation to the reign of David. One among them who was totally blind, could tell by heart all the stopping places of Israel in the desert, and could even point them out on the map by the touch.

The most remarkable part of it was the interest shown by husbands in teaching their wives to read. Those who but a few years before had thought it a disgrace for a woman to read and go to church, could now be seen worshiping with them in the same place.

Thus far the labors of the missionaries had been confined to the villages of Oroomiah. But in 1851, during the seminary vacation, the teachers and a number of missionaries and native helpers, started out for the mountain districts of Kurdistan to labor among the Nestorians, who live in those regions beyond. They spent several months in evangelistic work, although the difficulties of such an undertaking were enormous; viz., the ruggedness of the mountains, the ignorance of the people, and the opposition of the Nestorian patriarch, whose home was in Kurdistan. Yet the heralds of the cross went forward from village to village, even in that distant land, preaching the word, and wherever they went they had multitudes to listen. The foundation for this work had been laid when Dr. Ashel Grant,

TEACHERS AND GRADUATING CLASS, FISKE SEMINARY.

in 1842, traveled through that region. Besides, many studies in both seminaries were from there and carried home with them the seeds of truth, though no wide-spread impression had been made until the expedition above mentioned, when the missionaries spent some time among the people. They sowed seed with faith and courage which, watered by the work done since, has brought forth an abundant harvest.

WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS.

Women's meetings for Bible study and religious exercises, as we have seen, were already successfully established in many places. But they had no organized societies for the promulgation of the gospel until the year 1885. It was when the jubilee or semi-centennial anniversary of the mission was observed. The great assembly met in the premises of the Oroomiah College. It was an occasion of great joy and spiritual uplifting. The addresses, lectures, and sermons both by natives and missionaries were eloquent and inspiring. More than half of the 1,500 people present were women and girls. Besides the public exercises, which all the women attended most eagerly, the women met together separately for prayer and consultation under Mrs. J. H. Shedd, who was a fine organizer, and who has done more than any missionary since the days of Misses Fiske and Rice. At one of these meetings a "mite" society was started for the purpose of training the women in systematic giving.

The membership has steadily increased ever since and great good has been done. "Knooshyas," or women's meetings, were also organized at that time.

The whole plain of Oroomiah was divided into five districts. At the largest village in each district the women would gather from all the neighboring country three times a year. All five of these meetings are held on the same day and last one whole day. Native officers preside over them, and carefully prepared papers are read on topics which have been assigned beforehand. The subjects for discussion are usually religious, educational, or domestic, and the meetings are open to all, whether members or not. They are calculated to do great good as long as they are rightly conducted, and vigorously kept up, which we are afraid is not so in this respect.

PENTECOSTAL BLESSINGS.

We have stated briefly the beginnings and growth of the gospel work, and how the seed was sown in different directions among the women. Now we will mention a few facts in regard to the copious outpourings of the Spirit, the ingathering of many into the kingdom and the anointing of servants for his ministry. From the beginning of the mission until 1846, although the gospel truth was fervently and powerfully presented, few showed signs of conversion.

In 1845 the mission had undergone severe trials and persecutions from Mar Shimmon, the Nestorian Patriarch. The work at one time seemed to have gone to pieces. But instead of being discouraged, the missionaries became mighty in prayer and in faith. One of them said in the autumn of that year:

"God never formed a soul that Christ cannot redeem from the power of sin. I know this people are sunk in sin and degradation, but Jesus died to save them and we may see them forever stars in his crown of rejoicing, if we are only humble and faithful enough to lead them to the Savior."

When God wants to manifest his great power among men, he first begins with his own, and works through them for others. The first hopeful indications were seen among the students of the Male Seminary in earnest prayers and pleading supplications for their own sins. From there it spread, first touching the Female Seminary and from there to the villages, like advancing prairie fire.

The first Monday of January, 1846, was a day of fasting and prayer. Miss Fiske, at morning devotions, told her pupils in her touching and impressive manner, that many were praying for them on that day in a distant land. (She referred to the days of special prayer observed at Mount Holyoke Seminary where Miss Fiske had been educated, for the mission in Persia.) When the girls were dismissed to their studies two of them, Sanum and Sarah, lingered behind and approaching their teacher said in a low voice, "May we have to-day to care for our souls?" Having no closet, they went to the wood cellar and spent the day in prayer and supplication. This was the beginning.

One evening the teachers of both seminaries got together and continued in prayer until midnight, and the Spirit was poured out upon them. For three weeks the spirit of prayer so pervaded both schools that it seemed like an unending Sabbath. The cellars, the closets, and all the corners of the premises were occupied day and(for the most part) night by the weeping, penitent girls. Before the close of the school term, over fifty, in the two schools, had given themselves to God. And when the summer vacation came, they went to their homes carrying with them the glad tidings of the gospel so that the whole community was awakened that year and many were added to the kingdom.

The next great awakening took place in the year 1849. The revival of 1846 had been principally among the students of the two seminaries, and under the influence of the missionaries themselves. The revival of 1849 was more general, and the chief instruments were the native helpers, both men and women. These also, like the missionaries in 1846, began with prayer and supplication for themselves. Among them may be mentioned John and Yonan, both natives of Geog-Tapa, who preached with power and earnestness. Their zeal, earnestness, and love for souls was not excelled by that of Wesley, Whitefield, and Finney. Among the women, Sanum, Sarah, and Moressa took the lead. They went from house to house in their village praying with the women. One old woman who was over seventy years of age entered into the work with a zeal that might shame many a younger woman of this generation. She toiled to bring more aged women to the Cross, taking them to her closet and praying for their salvation. The old woman continued to work in this way until her death and when she was dying she said, "I am going after Jesus!"

In another village, noted for its vice and ungodliness, often called "Sodom," old men and women were seen in the stables and barns praying for hours at a time. Visitors from all around thronged to the seminary to inquire the way of salvation. One came to Miss Fiske, throwing herself upon her and exclaiming with tears, "Do tell me what to do, or where to go to get rid of my sins!" How gladly she was pointed to the "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." The ministers and missionaries rejoiced to see how many husbands, old and young, were anxious and praying for their wives and wives for their husbands.

The next great revival took place in the year following, 1850, and the next in 1856, in both of which the interest commenced in the seminaries.

On the day preceding the revival of 1856, the missionaries, including Miss Fiske, met together in the Female Seminary and discussed with deep feeling, the dullness and lukewarmness among the Christians. After the meeting, when Miss Fiske returned to her room, she found that all the pupils and Miss Rice had gone to bed. She was left alone. Her thoughts brooded sadly over the state of her charge. She could not sleep, but lay thinking over the duties of the morning. Eleven o'clock struck and there was a knock at the door. Weary and worn with anxiety and sleeplessness, she almost dreaded to open it lest there should be some further detention from her much needed rest. She did open it, however, and there stood one of her pupils who asked gently:

"Are you very tired?"

"No, not very; why do you ask?"

"I cannot sleep, our school has been resting on me all day and I thought perhaps you would help me pray."

The spell was broken, and with a full heart Miss Fiske exclaimed:

"Come in, thou blessed of the Lord!"

They laid all their burdens at the feet of Christ and then slept sweetly until morning. The next day the good work began.

In the following year, 1857, there was again a gracious outpouring of the Spirit upon the pupils and the community.

In the year 1858, Miss Fiske took her final farewell from her field of labor to return to her home in America. In the last meeting there were ninety-three sisters in

Christ to bid her good-bye. She could well praise the Lord for what he had wrought.

During the four following years, when Miss Rice had charge of the seminary, revival followed revival. Thus in nineteen years from the establishment of the seminary there had been twelve remarkable outpourings of the Holy Spirit, and a great number of its students had been converted. Surely the prophecy of Joel is being fulfilled in these latter days also.

Some interesting facts are suggested by these awakenings in the Oroomiah mission.

First. These awakenings always began with the missionaries themselves, and worked out through them to others.

Second. That all these revivals came in answer to prayer. Not only agoninzing prayer by the principals of the schools, but also by those interested for them in America. Let me quote from a little book on Persia by Rev. Thomas Laurie, D.D.:

"While those two inquirers on the first Monday of 1846 were making closets among the wood in the cellar, it is distinctly remembered by some that Mary Lyon said that morning, 'We must pray more for Miss Fiske and her school.' Her words were heeded, and the answer noted when they heard of what took place in Persia that day. Almost the same things might be said of the same day in 1847 and 1849. The revival of 1856 began unexpectedly, but, when on the night of February

17, that pupil could not sleep because the whole school lay on her heart, and at midnight sought the help of her teacher in intercession, letters from America showed that they were not wrestling alone."

We are confident the same great results would follow the same measures everywhere and always. What we need in these days is only an awakening among God's missionaries, preachers and people. Then the world outside could not help feeling the influence.

CHAPTER XVII.

TRANSFORMING POWER OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST.

The mission work has been criticised by some on the ground that its converts are not sincere, that they accept Christianity only from convenience and mercenary motives. Others object to these religious awakenings on the ground that they are too sensational. Nine out of ten of the Christians in Oroomiah have been converted during the revivals which we have described. And in order to show the unfairness of all criticisms, let us judge by the character of the converts, and at the same time we trust to show something of the transforming power of the gospel of Christ, in the individual Christian and in all his relations of life.

In the first place, let us note the prayerfulness of these Nestorian Christians.

An unconverted person rarely takes any pleasure in prayer. Only those whose hearts have been touched by the love of Christ and who recognize their need of the saving, cleansing, and sustaining power of God can take delight in spending certain hours of every day in meditation and supplication. Before the revival of 1846, although some of the men and women who attended the seminaries were in direct connection with mission work, attending services and probably going through the form of prayer, yet they had little of the feeling of it. But after the revival a tide of humility and deep emotion swept the community. The new converts manifested a great and increasing longing for communion with God. Their Oriental metaphors and figurative language can hardly find expression in any other language. The following will illustrate:

"O God, we beg that the dog may have a single crumb from the table of the Master!" "We are prodigals, hungry, thirsty, naked, far from the Father's house, Lord save me, I perish!" "All our righteousness is as filthy rags!" "Blessed Savior, we will cling to the skirts of thy garments and hope for mercy till our hands are cut off!" "O Lord, we pray that we may never deny thee, even to the blood of our neck!" "We are hanging over a lake of fire with a heavy load upon our backs, by a single hair and that is almost broken!" "We are in a ship burned almost down to the water!" "The flames are just seizing upon us, O God, have mercy, O Son of David, have mercy."

These expressions would often be accompanied by beating the breast like the publican in the temple, or bowing the face upon the ground. Once a poor woman came to the seminary weeping for her sins. Miss Fiske came to her and prayed, pointing her to Jesus who was wounded for her sins. She then asked the poor woman to pray for herself. "But I can't pray! I don't know your prayers!"

"Don't try to pray like me or like anybody, but just tell God how you feel and what you want," said the teacher.

"May I tell God just what is in my heart?"

Being assured on this point, she fell on her face weeping aloud, saying amid sobs:

"O God, I am not fit even for an old broom to sweep with." And there she stopped.

Another was known as "Praying Sarah." She was the pupil who was invited to pray with Deacon Isaac, brother of the Patriarch.

Miss Fiske had a room where they used to meet often for prayer. They called it "Bethel" for really it was a Bethel for many of them. The voice of prayer would often be heard at midnight on the housetop, when everything was quiet. Miss Fiske often knelt with them upon the fresh hay in the manger to pray, and this, not only in the time of revivals, but continually. They also confidently expected what they prayed for, and claimed the promises of God in answer to their prayer. If we remember that these people, before their conversion, were obstinate, proud, and hard as a rock, we can never doubt that the grace of God can change a heart of stone to a heart of flesh.

In the second place, their love and devotion to the Bible shows the genuineness of their conversion, Unconverted persons seldom read the Bible. I think one reason is because such persons and the Bible do not agree very well upon a great many subjects. The Bible hurts their conscience every time they read it. Therefore they avoid it as far as possible. Only he who is changed by the Holy Ghost takes delight in meditating upon the precepts and promises of the sacred writ. Here too we find these Nestorian converts on the highest level of passion and longing for the word of God. I do not think anywhere in the Christian world could be found persons who have learned the Bible more readily or lovingly than they. They are more like Scotch Christians in this respect. The young converts would take their Testaments with them wherever they went, in the field, in the vineyard, and at home. When the noon hour came, while some would sleep and rest for the afternoon's toil, these converts would employ it in reading and memorizing the Scriptures. Some of them were so poor they could not afford to burn oil at night, so they read by moonlight. When they spun they would fasten the book on a shelf so that they could read at the same time. Once when a woman was asked if she could repeat her Sunday school lesson, she replied: "O yes, I repeated it over just now while I was milking."

There were some, and there are some to-day, who can repeat most of the Bible by heart, and quote passage after passage.

There was one little girl who was blind. After she got interested in the Bible she found her way every day to the mission school in the village and taking her seat by the teacher she listened attentively to the reading of the Bible by the others. In that way she became so familiar with the Scriptures that she could almost repeat the whole of the New Testament. When the religious meetings were going on she was the first to attend. She was so concerned about some of her companions who did not know how to read the Bible, that she took them every day to the woods and repeated one chapter by heart and prayed with them. God greatly blessed her work and she died at last a beautiful, triumphant death.

Not only individual Christians, but in all Christian families the Bible is read twice every day.

The third indication of their genuine conversion is the transformation in moral character.

While it is true that the Ethiopian cannot change his skin, nor the leopard his spots, yet it is true also, that Ethiopians and cannibals have changed their character and disposition which lie deeper down than the color or markings of the skin. One needs only to see and experience these miraculous changes going on every day to appreciate the power of the gospel.

We have stated before, the moral degradation of these Nestorian women before the gospel was carried to them. Indeed it was many years after, ere the change could be fully realized. The revilings and profanity which were common among them were beyond description.

No wonder the ancients painted the furies in the form of women. One of these women, up to the time of her conversion, was so opposed to the preaching of the missionaries, that when a young man who had heard them spoke favorably of them, she poured upon him such a volley of oaths and curses that it was dreadful to hear. The pupils of the seminary, in its early days, used to swear and use the vilest language on the slightest provocation. And when rebuked for it, would answer: "Do you think people will believe me, if I do not repeat the name of God very often?"

Lying and stealing were also very common among them. "Nothing," says Miss Fiske, "was safe in the early days of the seminary, except under lock and key. When questioned about it, they would say proudly, 'We all lie here! Do you think we could succeed in business without it?' " Now when we see these same women in a few years become gentle, loving, sympathetic, and Christlike, we cannot but believe the divine nature has been imparted to them through the regenerating power of the gospel.

Even in *personal appearance*, Christianity has made a complete change in them. When the missionaries first came in contract with them they were repulsively filthy and unattractive. Whatever natural beauty they had was obscured. Miss Fiske was obliged to teach her pupils cleanliness as well as book learning and godliness. Their homes were still worse. Families of two or three generations lived, slept, and ate under the same roof, with little care for dusting or cleansing the furniture. The consequences were that vermin of all kinds had accumulated in many homes to a disgusting extent. The sweet pleasures of home and family relations were something almost unknown. You may be sure, except for the sake of truth, patriotism would tempt me to keep silence on these subjects. But let the gospel be appreciated.

If one who had seen them in such a condition, would go into the homes now, and become acquainted with the family life, and see the attractiveness of homes and individuals after they became converted, it would be no less wonderful to him than the supernatural in the Bible. It is truly said that "cleanliness is next to godliness," and some in this Christian America might learn of them, now, in many of these things.

Again, the self-sacrifice of these converts is a strong evidence of their changed life and motives.

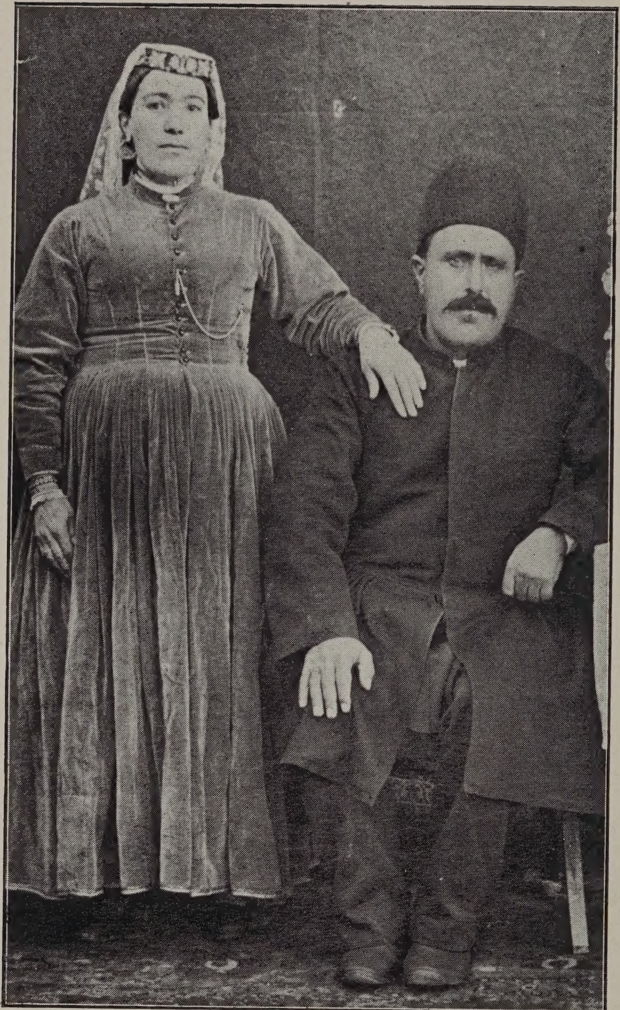
The foundation of the Christian religion is the cross on Calvary. The Master has summoned every follower to take up the cross and follow him. To be a true Christian is to be in the service and for the service continually. There is no room in the Church for any person who will enlist in the army of Christ from motives of worldly gain or welfare.

We may study the self-sacrifice of these Nestorian converts from three points of view.

Sanctified giving, consecrated lives, and patient endurance in persecutions.

It is truly said that a converted man must have a converted pocketbook. These converts were taught as soon as possible to give to the Lord. As early as 1844 we have records that pupils of the seminary made fifty garments for poor children. In the following year when some mountaineers came to beg money for their ragged children, the pupils were asked: "Who will give her own clothes and wear poorer ones until she can make others?" Many responded at once. In 1848 the collection at a monthly concert of prayer, from these same pupils, amounted to $7.00, which was used for sending the gospel to the mountains. They had special hours every week in the scholastic term for sewing for benevolent purposes. At the end of one term they had raised $16.00 in that way.

The subject of giving was for the first time presented to the congregation in the village of Geog-Tapa in 1852 by John and Yonan. On the first Sabbath of that year John preached on the subject and a few krans (twenty cents each) were contributed. On the first Sabbath of the next month my father preached on the same subject. He was well posted, as Miss Fiske had read with him the prize essays on benevolence, published by the American Tract Society. After showing the needs of the world, Bibles were distributed among those present for a Bible reading on the subject. The passages which had



Mirza David M. Yonan and Wife.

been selected showed first, the antiquity of benevolent contributions; second, that the poor were to give as well as the rich; third, the promises of God which are linked with the command to give. There were two hundred present that day, and the contribution, in money and cotton yarn amounted to more than fifteen krans.

On the month following it was increased to twenty-five krans, almost double. Some women who had no money, gave eggs and crosses of ivory and silver were often seen in the contribution box.

At one time a woman came to one of the ladies of the mission while alone in her room, and took out a gold ornament, the only one of any value she possessed. It had been handed down as an heirloom in her family for many generations. This, she said she wanted to give to help to send the gospel to others, only no one must know who gave it. The ornament was sold for $4.00. Some women cut off the silver fastenings of their outer garments and cast them into the Lord's treasury.

There was a remarkable revival of benevolence in 1861. A full account of it was written by my father to Miss Fiske and Mrs. Stoddard and also to Dr. J. H. Shedd. It was published in "Woman and Her Savior in Persia," and also in June (1895) issue of the "Rays of Light," a paper published in Oroomiah. He says:

"The prayers and tears of our missionary friends have this winter received a joyful reward from our Father in heaven." He then proceeds to tell of the observance of the week of prayer, of the continuance of the spirit of prayer during the weeks and months following. Then of the meeting of the monthly concert of prayer for missions on the last Sabbath in March. At that time a stiring appeal was made to raise funds to support a preacher in the mountains. The Spirit of God was among them, and "every obstacle was swept away." When one after another had given with a willing heart, "Guwergis cried out, 'Women, where are you? In the wilderness women gave their brazen mirrors.' I (Yonan) said, 'Holy women, to-day ends fifteen years of the prayers of Christianity among us. Speak!' (It was fifteen years since the revival in 1846.) One replied, 'I half a monat;' 'and I a head-dress;' 'I a silver ornament;' 'I my earrings;' and so on. A widow said, 'I have kept my husband's coat till now; I will sell it and give half the price.' A mother said, 'I have nothing now, but I will give the work of my hands this winter, a tope (ten yards) of cotton cloth.' Time was given for all to contribute, and then we spent a season in joyful song and pleasant prayer. The report of what had been done spread quickly through the village, and my mother-in-law sent word that she would give a hundred and twenty-eight pounds of raisins. In the morning, before I was up, my uncle and his wife came and promised a load of wheat (five bushels); and when passing through the village, a woman put an ornament in my pocket to sell for the cause. Monday we came to the city for the gospel day (the concert is held there on Monday), and every one who met us remarked our glad faces. In the meeting, after Mr. Coan spoke, John opened a bundle of the gifts, and Moses described the scenes of the day before. I said, 'One toman led to sixty in our village yesterday: perhaps it will lead to hundreds more.' Many times the good in the heart of the Christian comes up into his mouth, and then goes back; but when the power of God prevails, it not only comes into the mouth, but comes forth and abounds. Priest Yakob added, 'For twenty-five years we have said, "Let the Lord go before;" and now that he has come, let us wait no longer, but give.' "

And then the giving commenced there. Later on Yonan adds:

"In our village, besides the tithes, seventy tomans were collected, and in the city two hundred and fifty. I hope the whole will go up to five hundred or more. I stand amazed. I can think nothing but, 'I am a miserable sinner.' The glorious God has gone before us in mercy. For two or three years our village was going down; we were at variance and in trouble; but Immanuel met us with a blessing, a hundredfold beyond our expectation. The pledges then made have since been fulfilled, with very few exceptions, and that not regretfully, but with a heartiness truly affecting to those who knew their poverty."

The contributions have since increased in many village churches, some of which have become entirely self-supporting. From the above descriptions the following lessons may be gathered:

First. The giving was started with earnest prayer, and the subject was presented to the people by faithful ministers of the gospel.

Second. That poverty is no hindrance in giving to the Lord.

Third. That small begininngs sometimes result in great endings.

Fourth. That giving is not only a duty but a transcendent privilege of the child of God, and proceeds from an atmosphere of love and devotion.

Fifth. God blesses most the giving which costs the most.

If the churches, missionary societies and all God's children could only learn to appreciate this great privilege of giving to the Lord, the boards would not to-day be crippled by debt and God's work hindered by want of funds.

Then as to their consecrated lives. We have only time and space for a few instances:

Hanna was the daughter of a wealthy and intelligent Nestorian. In 1845, when a little child, she was brought to the Seminary to be taught "wisdom," but she was so high tempered and perverse that the teachers could hardly manage her at all. Her fits of anger and rage were so violent that she was frequently sent home for weeks and months. Hence, she learned "wisdom" rather slowly at first. After her conversion a great change took place. She became one of the gentlest, most lovable of characters, ready to give up everything for Jesus, and to make any sacrifice for the good of souls. Badal, a native helper, son of an herdsman, proposed to her father to marry her and take her with him to the mountains, whither he was going to preach. Her father told her of the proposition. She replied meekly: "I should rejoice to suffer with the people of God. I choose to go with Badal." And in June, 1858, she left for the mountains. She was very happy and bravely endured every privation, but her health failed and she died in December, 1860. In the year following her death, her brother to whom her property had been left, was awakened by the Spirit and immediately gave up the property to sustain the laborers in the mountains.

Sarah, the wife of Kasha Oshana, who is still living, is another example of devout consecration. She is the daughter of Priest Abraham of Geog-Tapa, and was among the earliest pupils of the seminary. After marriage, she, also, gladly went to the mountains with her husband to labor for the poor, ignorant people there. Her hardships and privations have been beyond description, yet she is always happy. She is considered one of the most scholarly among the Nestorian women. Her letters from the field of labor are read with interest and profit by the pupils of the seminary and the ladies of the mission.

Leya, of Geog-Tapa, is another who has done much evangelistic work in recent years. She studied at the seminary and married one of my uncles. For many years her home duties demanded her whole time and Christian effort. But after her husband died she was employed under Mrs. Shedd to work among the women. She went from village to village in Oroomiah and has made several trips to the remotest parts of the mountains. Often she had to climb the steep and rugged hills on her hands and feet in dangers and privations almost unendurable. Her reports are most thrilling and pathetic. Recently she has been very much broken by bereavement after bereavement in her own immediate family. Yet the last letter I received from her, soon after the death of a son, a strong and brave youth, was full of the comfort of trust in Jesus.

If there were only space, many others might be mentioned whose devotion and courage in the Master's service are well worthy of imitation. Nor have they failed in "patient endurance" in the time of persecutions and trials. Persecution is a severe test of the faith of God's people. The Nestorian converts, especially women, have undergone great trials from the beginning. They were persecuted by the Moslems; they were persecuted by Mar Shimon, their own patriarch, and by the unconverted parents and brothers. They were often beaten by their husbands and fathers-in-law and driven from home. My devoted mother who was an earnest Christian, was often hindered by her father-in-law from praying in the house. When driven from home, she would take a little company of believers with her to the woods and pray with them.

Persecutions and trials have never been able to crush the Church of God; they rather develop it. As one of the fathers said, "God brought down the hammer and the sparks flew abroad." Such has been the case with the missionary work among the women of Persia.

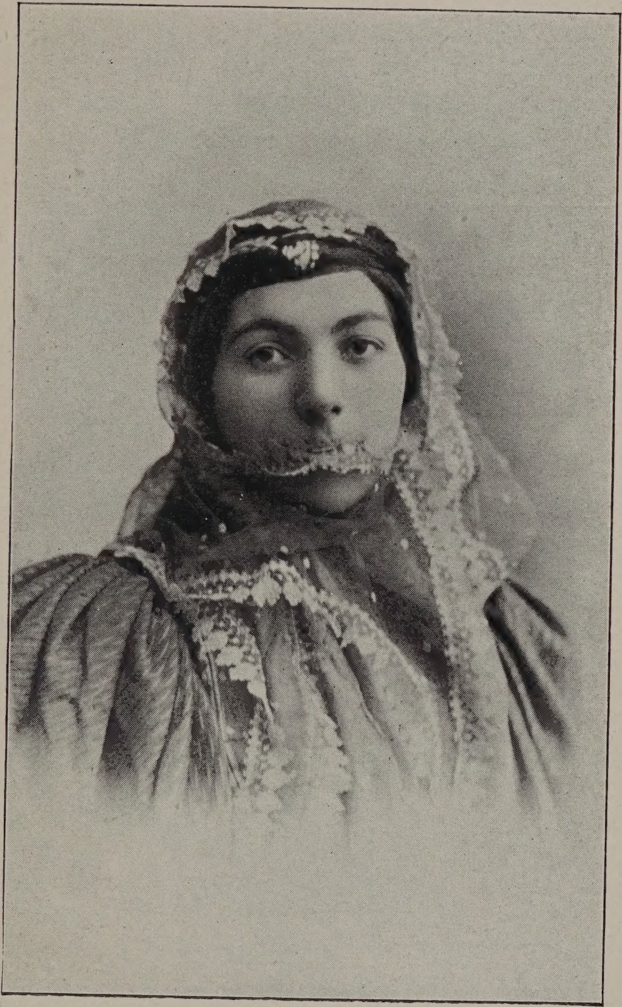
The following extracts from a letter written in 1876 by Hanne, my wife's (Mrs. Yonan's) mother, will have a deeper interest for its readers when they know a little of its history. During the year 1876 Mrs. C. H. DeLong, of Dwight, Illinois, was President of a local missionary society. They determined to employ a native preacher in Persia, and secured Pastor Baboona and wife Hanne. This brought about a correspondence between Mrs. DeLong and Hanne. In boxes sent to the missionaries was a doll for the little girl who afterwards became Mrs. Yonan. Years rolled by when we were at Colorado Springs, Col., in the summer of 1897, on a little vacation. I preached in the Second Presbyterian Church. In the congregation was a retired minister and his wife, who kindly invited us to dine with them. In examining some curiosities from Persia in the parlor of Mrs. DeLong, I found in a pen box a beautiful letter written in Syriac, which, to my surprise, was from my wife's mother. Explanations followed and to the joy of Mrs. DeLong she found she was entertaining the daughter of her long-ago beloved Persian friend, the little girl who had been so delighted with the doll from the missionary box.

We trust by publishing this letter to show the sweetness of spirit, energy, consecration, gratitude, and love of its author to Christ and immortal souls, who was from early life a convert and a graduate of the Female Seminary in Oroomiah; also to encourage those who sent boxes to foreign lands, assuring them it will be returned in after years in blessings unexpected. "Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it after many days."

Oroomiah, Persia, Village of Gavalan, July 20, 1876.

Love and Peace to you from Hanne; beloved and dear
friend, Mrs. DeLong:

First, I inquire for the health of one like you, a new lady friend; and not only a friend, but a beloved sister. Suddenly her love was revealed to me from a distance, coming from the other side of the waters, by the arrival of that little box filled with love. By this we take hold by a chain by which you and I and your society are making the attempt to render habitable waste places, and to bring forth worthy fruits for the kingdom of our Lord and blessed Redeemer. I too here am bound by it to labor as I am able for every soul; to unite it with us to bring forth fruits for our Lord from every nation.



MRS. YONAN.
Head Dress, First-class Nestorians of Oroomiah.

Truly this is not a small work nor an earthly nor a perishing one, but a great and lasting work which has for its foundation the salvation of sinnners. Yes, when the world is destroyed and its elements separated, all the work of the faithful who are bound by this chain and drawn together in this spiritual work will be plain and manifest. Although here their bodies are concealed by the circumference of the earth and they cannot see each other (just as you and I are separated), although I so earnestly long to see you I cannot, but I look forward to the day when I shall meet with you and with your sweet society. Of course to see each other in this world is impossible but by our spirits and by our love and fellowship which is centered in Christ we see each other daily. Hereafter I do not believe that it will be destroyed, but that it will increase and incite my thoughts to spiritual work and bind me with you more firmly in the love of Christ our blessed Savior. You should know that your letter and all the things which were in that box reached me April 16, 1876, by the hand of the honored Mr. Stocking. Your letter greatly rejoiced my heart and the things in the box delighted the children; and also the mothers of those children who received of the little dolls and pictures. Many of the women were astonished and exclaimed, "How is this? Having never seen you they have sent you such things?" My answer to them was, "The love of Christ brings forth such fruit and makes all nations acquainted with each other by the teaching of the gospel." For this reason we are calling you that you also may be in our ranks. You wish to know about our work now, and where we are. We have again returned to the field where we first labored. Your letter to me was directed to Ada (a village of Oroomiah). We were there six years. It is a year and eight months since we left Ada. Now we are in Gavalan, a village lying by itself at the outskirts of the plain of Oroomiah and at the west of Lake Oroomiah, surrounded by the Mussulman villages. A few years before this the whole village was Nestorian. During the last few years the papists have entered it and things are considerably mixed, but the Priest (Priest Baboona, her husband), has labored here from his youth. He has taught as many as eighty young men and women to read, and now since we have returned here the work of the papists has gone backward a good deal. That is, some of the young men and women who had read with my husband had been deceived by the papists and led away from their faith; now again their inclinations are toward the gospel truth. Many of them again come to hear the glad tidings. Our church members are sixteen, four women and twelve men, but our congregations sometimes number seventy or eighty. Aside from this I have a class of women whom I teach in Sunday school, and also meet for prayer. They hear and pay good attention. This class of women sometimes numbers twenty or thirty. I rejoice to teach them and have much anxiety about the salvation of their immortal souls. I believe that you pray for us, and I ask that you continue to pray for us. When I meet with my dear Master I pray for you, and I think that you pray in our behalf that God would bless our service here, which is in the hope of Christ, that quickly these souls for whom we are working should be counted in the Church of Christ as living stones, the fruit of your effort in the gospel, and of those of your country for us and for our fallen people. Our nation is small; it had not strength to send preachers from place to place, but by the grace of your country we have been elevated to this degree, and we leave our native place and remove to other places to teach and to preach Christ for every nation and people. We are now supported by the help of your contributions. A small portion of our living comes with great difficulty from the Church because they are poor and few. They have not the strength to supply all of our needs. I wish to let you know why until now I have waited and have not sent you a letter. It was in my heart to write to you just in those days that your letter came to my hand. My delay was only on account of this: I wished to send you some trifles from Persia to please the girls who were associated with you in sending me those things. I waited for one of the missionaries to come to us that I might inquire when they would send boxes to your country. They came late. For that reason there was delay. You wish to know about my family. We are five (the literal translation is, "We are five heads"), two ourselves and three are children. Two of them are daughters and one little son. Give my thanks to that aged mother, and thank her for the trouble, and also to all that band who are associated with you, and all your friends. I hope that you will never forget me in your letters and in your prayers, continually. The priest (her husband), too, sends his love and peace to your husband and to you and to all your friends. I am still in hopes that when missionaries send boxes to your country, a small box from me will reach you. Amen.

DYING TESTIMONY.

One of the strongest evidences of Christianity is the bright hope and cheerfulness of the believer in the prospect of death. At a time when all the powers of hell are engaged to shake the hope and to mar the peace of the last moments; when Satan showers his fiery darts by painting before the soul the vision of an angry judge, a broken law, and a night of eternal despair; it is at such a time that Jesus is closest to his dying child with his staff of comfort and defense, and beats back the mighty foe, so that the believer may sing with the Psalmist: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

Let us go to the bedside of a few of these converted women in the land of Esther and hear their last testimony. Miss Fiske writes of little Sarah, whose name has been mentioned before. On Sabbath morning she was as comfortable as she had been for several days. But soon after noon it was evident that she must go. Her sufferings became intense and, for a moment forgetting her father's absence, she said:

"Let my father come!"

She was told that her father had gone to preach. She replied:

"Oh, now I remember, he has gone to preach the gospel; do not send for him on my account, let him preach!"

Then it was proposed to send for her teacher (Miss Fiske), she said:

"I wish to see her once more, but you must not call her, this is the hour when she prays with my companions, let her pray."

From this time her sufferings were so great that she hardly spoke for an hour. Just as the silver cord was loosing, she said in a clear voice:

"My mother, I shall go very soon; raise me up that I may commit my spirit."

The mother raised the dying child. She knelt, supported by maternal love and said:

"Lord Jesus receive ——." And the dear child had gone to heaven.

Blind Martha was noted for memorizing the New Testament. While on the bed of sickness she spent most of her time in prayer. When it was suggested that praying so much might weary her, she replied:

"I know I am weak, but praying never tires me."

Just at the dawn of a smiling June morning she said:

"Mother, the day breaks, I think Jesus is coming for me, let me go!"

The mother rose, but seeing no particular change she slept again. When she awoke the sun was shining brightly and looking at the face of dear Martha, lo! Jesus had come and taken her to himself.

Another, when at the point of death, was asked by her brother:

"Sister, are you dying?"

She replied gently: "Brother, don't weep, the will of the Lord be done." When asked by the missionary who was at her bedside, "Have you no fear of death?" She said, "No," and slept in Jesus.

Another one, while the little group of companions were sitting around to catch the precious words that fell from her dying lips, said:

"The blessed Savior is my all and to him I wish to go."

Turning to her friends she said:

"Love the Savior more than I have loved him!"

Such has been the testimony of hundreds who have fallen asleep in Jesus, to mingle their voices with those of the angels and saints around the throne of the Almighty, since the gospel message was taken to Persia. Such witnessing for the Church of God may well defy all the arguments of the skeptic and the scoffer against missions, for only the supernatural power of the supernatural God could have wrought such marvelous transformations.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A GLIMPSE OF THE GENERAL WORK.

Thus far we have confined ourselves to the mission work among the Nestorians, as that was the first, and has been the most fruitful work done in Persia. But, inasmuch as the Nestorians are only about one-tenth of the population of the district of Oroomiah, it may be well, before leaving this part of the subject to make some mention of the work done among other races, such as Jews, Armenians, and Moslems. Faithful efforts have been made through the Nestorians to reach them. Miss Van Duzee has been in the habit of visiting Jewish women in their quarter twice a week, and a number of the girls are receiving instruction at their homes. Although opposition continues strong, yet the Nestorian Bible women are more encouraged now than heretofore. And what is still more wonderful, a few, even of the Moslem women, have been truly converted, who cluster together in the missionary homes and receive instruction. But, the main agency for reaching these benighted women here, as elsewhere, has been the medical work.

Here they come in touch with every class. The two beautiful hospitals in Oroomiah, one for men the other exclusively for women, are both under the kind and skilful management of Dr. J. P. Cochran. And twice a week the dispensary is opened, where the lame, the blind, and the halt are brought for treatment. Dr. Cochran's influence is manifest among rich and poor. The lamented Mrs. D. P. Cochran, the mother of the Doctor, who was for years the "house-mother" of the hospital, can never be forgotten. Although dead, she yet speaketh through the memory of hundreds who received from her words of instruction and comfort while in the hospital. Although the direct fruits may not be apparent, yet the impressions made are deep and abiding and widespread.

Now let us turn our faces to the vast country outside of Oroomiah, and see what has been done for the millions of women dwelling there in misery and degradation. It is encouraging to see the desert smile, with here and there a green oasis, a "rose of Sharon" and a "lily of the valley" shedding rich perfume around, to gladden the hearts darkened by sin and superstition. There are five regular stations and a great many out-stations beyond the limits of Oroomiah, where efforts are continually being made to reach, elevate, and save the women. The main channels in all of these have been, the evangelistic, educational, medical work, and the colporteur. The difficulties at these stations have been greater and of somewhat different character from those encountered in Oroomiah. Time, however, has wrought sure and marvelous progress.

One of the first stations established after Oroomiah was Tabriz, opened in the year 1873. This is the largest and most enterprising of the cities of Persia. It has a population of 200,000 made up principally of Moslems and Armenians. The first lady missionary in this field was Miss Jewett, who has continued to labor there ever since. She is now a most active worker in the out field Last year's report says: In one tour which lasted two months, she visited the out-stations and the surrounding field to the south of Lake Oroomiah and preached the gospel to some seven hundred women and children.

The girls' school which was opened from the beginning, has been under the care of Miss Holliday, assisted by an efficient native Armenian and his wife. The number of pupils last year was fifty-five, of whom thirty were boarders, and most of them Armenians.

The medical work for women at that point, has been under Miss Bradford, M. D. The dispensary was thronged with patients all through the year, from all classes and races. The record shows that 3,095 patients have been in attendance during the year. The native Bible woman has done a great deal, conversing and reading the Bible to the waiting patients. Dr. Bradford has also made excursions around the city visiting villages, treating the sick, and ministering to the souls. She has made a fine impression in this Persian metropolis.

The work began at Salmas in 1884. This is the center of the largest Armenian and papal-Nestorian population. The first girls' school was opened here by Miss C. O. Van Duzee, sister of the one at Oroomiah. She opened with two girls only. But the number soon increased to fifty. Miss McLean, one of the teachers, giving the report of last year says:

"In spite of the threats and opposition of the Armenians, from the first, from January to the middle of February, the average attendance was forty-two, and from that time until the close of the school fifty-four.

The medical work at this station has been under Dr. Yohannan Sayad, a worthy and well qualified native Nestorian, who was educated in New York. All classes of women have been treated by him.

Mosul Station, in Assyria, has been opened in more recent years. Here the gospel has been preached to many women in Arabic. The girls' boarding school, however, is the chief instrumentality for reaching them. It has been under the superintendence of Miss Reinhard, though the responsibility and management has rested chiefly upon Mrs. Werda, a native helper, whose husband died in the early part of last year. Mrs. Werda is a consecrated graduate of the Fiske Seminary and well qualified for her duties. A kindergarten department has recently been added. The two graduates of last year are both now engaged in teaching.

A station was established at Teheran, the capital, in 1872, where earnest efforts have been made to reach all classes of women. "Iran Bethel," the girls' school under the care of Miss Schenck, with the assistance of other lady missionaries, has had encouraging prospects. The attendance of last year was seventy-eight, of whom sixty-one were boarders. An Industrial School has been recently opened in connection with it. Another school has also been opened here, especially for Jewish girls, superintended by Mrs. Potter, which, although at great disadvantage, has done remarkably well as to numbers and scholarship.

The medical branch of the work, as usual, is the most aggressive. The hospital arrangements are almost perfect. Miss Dale is the matron. During last year about 6,000 patients were treated, most of them women. Another dispensary has been opened in the Jewish quarter under Miss Smith, M.D. Thus the gospel has been preached to many women, not only through the regular preaching services on the Sabbath, but in the schools and in the dispensaries by means of Bible women.

The work in Hammadan has been carried on along the same lines as in other places. The "Faith Hubbard School," under Miss Montgomery, had during 1896 enrolled eighty-seven girls, three of whom were Moslems, six Jewesses, and the rest Armenians. The religious services held in the dispensary every morning except the Sabbath day has proved a great attraction. Miss Wilson, M.D., who is at the head of the medical work here, has done a good deal of itinerating in the villages around the city and with great success. Mirza Sa'eed, M.D., a native convert and a fine physician, has been for many years and is still stationed here; his work and his influence among all classes is remarkable; his natural talents as a scholar and his piety as a Christian gentleman are well worthy of imitation.

Such have been the channels of missionary propaganda in all the stations. The sick have been healed, the ignorant taught, and souls dead in trespasses and sins have been resurrected to life again. Homes have been blessed, broken hearts consoled, and the prisoners of custom and superstition released. Oh, what a blessing to the women of Persia!

But these wonders and signs have been wrought almost exclusively among the non-Mohammedan women of Persia. The question naturally arises, What has been done for the millions of Moslems, the most degraded of all? Owing to the intolerance and fanaticism of the Moslems, nothing has been done directly that could be counted. I suppose that in all of Persia not more than two or three hundred women have been reached, either by means of schools, medicine, or the direct preaching of the word. These few have made their way to the missionary in the silent hours of the night, like Nicodemus of old, or as opportunity offered. There is indeed, small hope of evangelizing them to any considerable extent, so long as the chasm of social inequality between the sexes exists as at present, and the foolish custom of secluding the women makes it almost impossible to reach them. And were the ministers of the gospel to inaugurate any vigorous measures for evangelizing these Moslem women, they would most likely suffer under the clubs and stones of the moollahs and Sa'eeds. Nevertheless we are thankful for the amount of good that has been done in an indirect way, which we are sure will bring forth fruit in the years to come. The seed has been sown in many ways. The example of the missionaries and the Christian converts of other races; the gentle, loving manner in which Christians treat their wives; the scattering of Bibles through the country; the trips of the Bible women and missionaries here and there; the open hospitals and dispensaries, to which most of them are compelled to go to obtain the medical advice and treatment they need; the kindness and sympathy of the missionaries in times of famine and pestilence, not infrequent there, must inevitably bring forth fruit in course of time.

THE LITTLE DONE—THE MUCH UNDONE.

I have thus told you briefly what has been done toward evangelizing and elevating the women of Persia. While a thousand times grateful for this much, I cannot refrain from pointing the reader to what remains yet to be done. Because it is so vast and appalling, it seems to me when I think of it that we have barely touched the fringe of the field. At a liberal estimate, the number of the evangelized women in Persia, from both Mohammedan and non-Mohammedan can hardly reach 5,000. How will that compare with about 5,000,000 who have never heard the name of Christ, nor received any of the benefits of his gospel? And these millions represent a life so awful and a woe so mournful that no words can depict it. O Christian sisters and mothers of America, I appeal to you in behalf of my countrywomen! Beloved friends, if you could only see their sordid misery and sinfulness, mere human sympathy and pity would move you to do something for their uplifting. But I point you to the crucified one upon Calvary! For his sake stretch out your helping hand.

"Poor blind lead blind, affrighted,
To ditch and darkness there;
Blood-bought 'women' benighted,
Are groping to despair.

"How can Christ's flock be gathered,
If none shall guide their way?
How long shall they be scattered?
How long, left lost to stray?"

In Conclusion.—Before closing these pages, as a native of Persia, and as one raised and cherished in the loving arms of missionaries, and also as a representative of my people, I deem it the great privilege of my life to acknowledge in all sincerity and reverence, the kindness, sympathy, and longsuffering of the missionaries in their labors among us. Some of their methods of work might be open to criticism—we are all but human—yet they have sown the seed in tears and shall surely reap with rejoicing. It is through their faithful work I have been impelled to give my life and energies to the same great cause.

Their self-sacrifice in leaving home and fatherland and all whom they knew and loved, to go among a strange people; especially the heroic devotion of gentle, delicate ladies in long journeys and under the piercing rays of the hot sun, in poor and unhealthy homes (that was particularly true of the pioneers). We would have the world to know that we are not ungrateful for all these things. We do love and honor them. Our fathers have loved them and shown tender respect to them.

When Mrs. Grant died after a few short years of toil, our bishops assembled and said to Dr. Grant:

"We will bury her in the church, where none but holy men are buried; she has done so much for us, we want the privilege of doing something for her, and we will dig her grave with our own hands."

And when the sainted Miss Fiske, the ideal missionary, and the idol of these Nestorians, left Oroomiah her pupils offered their earnest prayers that she might come back to them and mingle her dust with that of her children. And when they learned of her death, they wrote to her mother, "If there is another Fidelia Fiske send her to us!" May God yet hear that prayer and send a Miss Fiske to them.

When the beloved Mrs. D. P. Cochran died in Oroomiah, our old pastors, with hair whitened in the service, carried her coffin in their arms a great distance as a sign of reverence and honor for her loving labors among them. The lamented Dr. J. H. Shedd was honored and looked upon by all classes as a bishop, priest, and father.

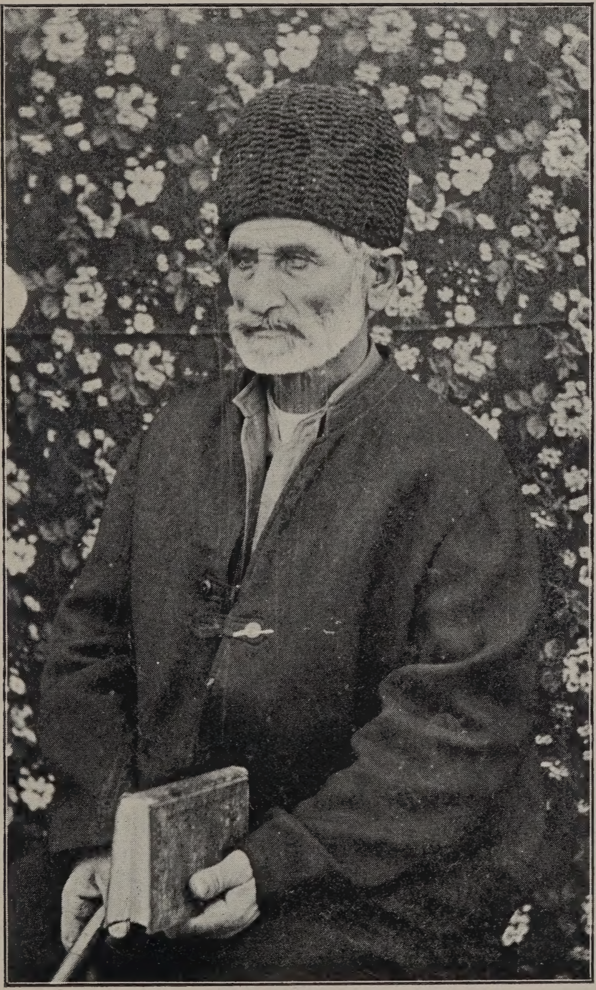
O winds, that sweep over those who have died for a cause they loved more than life, touch lightly we beg, the sacred dust! O sun, touch gently, with thy burning rays, the lives of those who still live and toil! Let the story of their love for humanity, of their untiring energy and unwavering faith and hope in Jesus Christ, be proclaimed throughout the world and in all coming generaitons, to stimulate, encourage, and inspire the children of God!

CHAPTER XIX.

MALEK YONAN.

From among a host of those who "through faith wrought righteousness, obtained promises, . . . out of weakness were made strong," we slect one name, that of Malek Yonan, father of the writer, of whom we wish to give a brief sketch at the close of this book on the women of Persia. We select him for three simple reasons. First, because he owes most of his education to Miss Fidelia Fiske; second, because it has been his privilege to do more in educating and saving Persian women than any other one of his countrymen; and third, because I have been often requested by kind friends to write a sketch of his life.

Malek Yonan, now in his seventy-fourth year, was born in Geog-Tapa, a village of 1,500 inhabitants, situated four miles east of the city of Oroomiah. The inhabitants of this village are among the best families of the Nestorians in Persia, and from the very beginning of the mission work it has been a center of influence and usefulness. It has given to the mission cause more preachers and Bible women than any other three villages of its size, and it has been for many years a self-supporting church. The surroundings of this little village are



MALEK YONAN.

very beautiful, with its luxuriant orchards, fruitful vineyards, and green meadows. From its name, situation, and relics in pottery, coins, and images, it is judged to have been of Assyrian origon. But nothing is certainly known beyond its early occupation by the Nestorian Christians. Here Yonan has lived his life. At the age of three months his mother died, leaving him under the care of his grandmother, Shirin who lived with her brothers. As they were shepherds, most of his childhood (like that of David) was spent in the sheepfolds and tents, playing with lambs and goats. His father was, at length, married a third time to a Nestorian girl, who had become a convert to the Roman Catholic faith. She took very little interest in Yonan, hence his childhood was almost wholly without training.

When the missionaries had been in the field a few years, his great uncle, Malek Agabeck, who had already come to believe in them, and to be greatly interested in their work, took Yonan to be taught and raised under the influence of the missionaries. In the Memoir of Dr. David T. Stoddard, one of the pioneer missionaries, we find the following extract, quoted in his own words:

"After my English class, Harriette reads and talks with John for an hour, while I am engaged in the same way with a boy named *Yonan*. His (uncle sometimes called) grandfather is a Malek at Geog-Tapa. Sometime since he applied to have Yonan received into some family of the mission and taught English. He was assigned to my care, and has been with me about three weeks. We are both much pleased with him. He is perhaps twelve years old, and as the Nestorians say, a very 'wise' boy. So far as I know he is quite serious minded and you would infer from his conversation that he was a Christian. Certain it is that he reads and expounds Scripture with an ability and correctness that I have never seen surpassed, and perhaps not equaled at his age in our own land. He seems to love to read his Bible to me and to tell me the meaning, as he understands it. As yet, he knows very little English and my only communication with him is in Syriac. If he be a Christian, God grant that he may grow fast in grace, and if he knows not the love of Christ, that he may be truly converted to himself. Yesterday, I learned with pleasure that he was one of the few who attended evening prayers in the Nestorian Church. You know the priests read their liturgy morning and evening every day in all their churches. Yonan, without any knowledge of mine, has been there every evening. The church is only a short distance off, in the city."

After some preparation Yonan was sent to the Male Seminary at Seir, where he distinguished himself and became a leader among the students and his quick intellect and social position enabled him to exert great influence either for good or evil over his schoolmates. Although thus, from his early years, brought into contact with missionary teaching and influence, hearing and knowing the truth of the gospel, yet no signs of regeneration could be seen in his life until that memorable year, 1846, when such a wonderful work of grace spread through the two seminaries and all the surrounding country. In the beginning of the revival, some of the students in the Male Seminary who were not in sympathy with the movement, grouped themselves together to plot against it. While discussing the situation one proposed to rise against it and put it down. But my father said: "I don't want to be a Christian; I don't mean to be, but I am afraid to oppose this; we had better let it alone. If it is God's work we cannot put it down, and if it is man's work it will come to naught without our interference." And his words settled the opposition, and nothing more was said or done about it.

In the afternoon of the same day, before they began their studies, some of them were found on their knees praying. Let me quote a few lines from "Woman and Her Savior in Persia:"

"In the evening, Mr. Stoddard sent for the two leaders in the opposition. One of the two was Yonan. Mr. Stoddard said to them, If you do not wish to be saved yourselves, I beg of you from inmost soul, not to hinder others!"

My father says, "From the very moment Dr. Stoddard spoke to me, eternity so opened up before me, that I was ready to be swallowed up. I longed for some one to speak to me of the way of escape. But no such word was spoken to me that night. I could not sleep, for I was almost sure there was but a step between me and death."

But grace soon triumphed and he was found upon his knees, his face upon the ground, begging for the pardon of his sins. He arose with the assurance that his sins were cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ. That moment marked an epoch in his life. Thus he who had opposed the Church like Saul of Tarus became its chief champion.

In the year 1847, just after the completion of his school days, he was married by his father contrary to his own wishes, and to one whom he did not love. For, according to the universal custom of the country, even among the Nestorians, the sons had no right to select their own wives. It was left entirely to the judgment of the fathers. Yonan, himself, had been educated beyond this unnatural custom, but his father was old and held to the old view in this matter, hence he carried his point despite the distress and earnest protest of the young man. Miss Fiske, writing of the revival of 1849, thus mentions this young married couple:

"Yonan, the junior teacher of the school, had been married by force two years before by his wicked father; that too, when his heart was fixed upon another in every way fitted to be his companion. It was a severe trial, but the grace of God triumphed and his great desire seemed to be the conversion of the wife thus forced upon him. At midnight he was often heard interceding for her. And in the early part of the revival the answer came. I will never forget the time when, in an adjoining room, I heard her, for the first time praying with her husband. It gave me a new insight into the meaning of the Scripture, 'they believed not for joy!' "

The new convert was very active among the women in her village, and has been ever since a devout child of God, full of good works. Malek Yonan has had great reason to be thankful for the Providence which directed his marriage, for the wife, at first so unwelcome, has proved a loving and sympathetic helpmate, a blessing to himself and his home. And thus by the grace of God, and by painstaking labor and patience, she developed her womanly and motherly graces to such a perfection, that she has been looked upon by her own family and neighbors as "the queen of home" and ideal housekeeper. No one that came in contact with her could help but praise her in glowing terms, and honor her for her gentle, sympathetic and loving nature.

Yonan possessed unusual qualifications for teaching, not only in intellectual capacity and accuracy, but also in patience, in love for the young, and in an almost magnetic influence over them. Hence he was called to teach in the Female Seminary soon after he had finished his course in the college, and occupied the position from 1847 to 1860, under the principalship of both Miss Fiske and Miss Rice. While teaching in the seminary, he likewise continued his own studies, perfecting himself in the English language under Miss Fiske, in order that he might be able to use commentaries and other helps in teaching exegesis to his classes. The missionaries, also, have for many years considered him their best teacher of Syriac, the native tongue of the Nestorians.

During his life at the Female Seminary, when the week's labor was done he used to go to Geog-Tapa, his native village, to spend the Sabbath. He soon became interested in organizing a Sabbath school there with the help of John and Moses. He was for some time superintendent, and likewise teacher of a woman's Bible class.

As soon as the school in Geog-Tapa was well established, he took Bibles and spelling books with him and went each Sabbath to some other village to organize similar schools, which have been ever since a blessing to our people.

He has, moreover, been preaching for over forty years, and always acceptably. His style is clear, vigorous, and full of the Scripture. He has been particularly successful as a revivalist. In his early days he preached much on the sins of the age and the awful judgments of God. Often when he pictured the wrath to come and the doom of the sinner, his hearers would shudder and run from his presence. But in his old age, like the Apostle John, he loves best to dwell on the great love of God to sinful man. He has made a great many evangelistic tours and was the first to offer to go to the mountains to preach. In a conference of missionaries and native helpers in Oroomiah, the necessities of the mountain field were discussed. On account of the difficulties and dangers all hesitated to volunteer for the service. My father at length got up and said: "I will go, I will leave to-morrow for the mountains!" His courage and enthusiasm thrilled the audience, and many others immediately offered themselves for the work. As a speaker on popular subjects he has never been excelled by any of his countrymen. He has been always at hand in the alumni meetings and commencements of the college and Fiske Seminary. I don't believe he ever has failed to mention the names of Misses Fiske and Rice in any one of his addresses before the missionaries, teachers and scholars of these institutions.

One secret of his great success in the ministry was his pastoral work. He sought to know and help the spiritual condition of each member of his flock, seeking private opportunities of conversing and praying with them, and having a rare gift for winning confidence and inspiring enthusiasm in Christian work.

He is, and always has been, pre-eminently a man of prayer. I have never known a man who took such delight in prayer as my father. He depends upon it as he does upon the bread and water which sustain his body. His private devotions often last three or four hours. Sometimes he is up in the morning long before sunrise, when everybody else is asleep, and nature in perfect quietness, and wrestles with the angel of God until sunrise.

In the summer he goes out to the orchard, a quarter of a mile from home, and spends hours in prayer, standing, kneeling, or walking to and fro. He has a custom of praying for each one of his children while asleep. Our home is around a large court, and each side of the court is occupied by one of his sons. At midnight, sometimes, he will be heard pleading with God for them, going from one window to the other by turn in the court.

I remember twice in my life when my mother was ill, and medicine seemed of no avail, he took my next older brother (now a graduate of Rush Medical College, Chicago) and myself, his two youngest sons, with him to church and prayed for my mother. On our return to her bedside she was better and in a few days able to be up again.

What a comfort it has been to me since I left home to think that my father takes me every day to the throne of grace. Not only does he pray daily for his own children and grandchildren, but for each of our missionaries by name, mentioning the special needs of each; and for all the boards and Christian churches in Europe and America, who are interested in the salvation of his people and the world.

He was the first man in Persia to inaugurate the family altar in his own household and to urge it upon all the people. Scarcely any day since his conversion, I believe, has worship been omitted in his household. During the week, especially in the latter years of his public life, the house would often be crowded from morning to night with people of all kinds and nationalities. But nothing was allowed to interfere with family worship. Hundreds of Mohammedans have sat with reverence and heard his reading and exposition of a chapter from the Bible, and have closed their eyes when he prayed, though at no other place or occasion would they do it. He had a custom for many years to have the Bible read in the family worship in five different languages, each one of his four sons and himself reading the same verse in a different language thus making the meaning of every word very clear.

Malek Yonan is a descendant of a well known family of Maleks or tribal kings or chieftains among the Nestorians. The office has been in the family for hundreds of years, is in a manner hereditary, yet the incumbent has the right to transfer it in his own lifetime to some near relative, if his own son prove unfitted for it.

When the missionaries first went to Oroomiah, my father's uncle, Agabeck, was Malek, and finding no one in his own family worthy to succeed him, he gave his titles and government seals to my father before his own death, and made him Malek. For over thirty years, now, he has served in this office, and has filled it with sagacity and courage. The corrupt influences and ways of the Oriental courts have never been able to dim the luster of his consecrated Christian life, nor to hinder his power and influence as a preacher of the gospel of Christ. Twice most of his property has been taken from him by haughty Moslem superiors, yet he has maintained his position in spite of Moslem prejudice.

In late years, though much confined at home by feeble health and weak eyes, he has not failed to find work to do for his Savior. He has opened his home for a free school, where many young men, having no other opportunity for getting an education, come to him daily for instruction. Many of the young men thus taught by him are now preaching or teaching,. and some of them confess that they have learned more from him than in four years of the college course.

Malek Yonan's hospitable home has often been opened to strangers and he delights to entertain consuls, pious travelers from American and missionaries.

I beg leave to copy from a letter received by me not very long after coming to this country, the portion referring to such a visit.

Philadelphia, November 12, 1893.

"Mr. Yonan—My Dear Brother:—Nine years ago I went, with Dr. Shedd, of Oroomiah, and his son and mine, on the second Sabbath in November, from Oroomiah to Geog-Tapa, where we spent the day, attending the Sabbath schools, public worship, and in a short visit to the orphanage. At noon we were your father's guests, and sat down to the dinner with a number of prominent men and women whom your father had kindly invited to meet us. It was one of the most memorable and enjoyable Sabbaths of my life. I have told the story of that Sabbath and of that dinner at the house of Malek Yonan to many social companies and to many congregations and Sabbath schools in my own country. It never fails to awaken lively interest. Your honored father and his guests kindly took pains to explain and illustrate to me the great and happy change that had been wrought in their community by the gospel, as it was brought to them fifty years before, and has been faithfully preached and taught ever since by Perkins, Grant, Fidelia Fiske, and their worthy successors. One illustration of the change was, I remember, specially emphasized, in the fact that two women sat with us at that dinner, honored as the gospel only teaches and influences us men to honor women, our sisters, our mothers, and the mothers of our children. . . . I do not know whether you remember my visit, but having seen in the "Christian Observer," of Louisville, that a son of Malek Yonan, of Geog-Tapa, is in the Louisville Theological Seminary, I could not be content without writing to you, and I will be truly thankful if you will write a letter to me. If you should ever be in Philadelphia, do not fail to find me at my office as given at the top of this page, or at my house (204 South 41st street), where I am now writing, and where I should delight to reciprocate the hospitality which I experienced in your Persian home. When you write to your honored father, be so kind as to remember me to him, and assure him of my very grateful remembrance of him.

With true brotherly love,

HENRY A. NELSON.

Editor "The Church at Home and Abroad."

I will close this brief sketch of my father with a valued testimony to his worth, written by a former missionary in Persia, but now in this country, connected with the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in New York, Rev. Benjamin Labaree, D.D.

"One of the earliest acquaintances I made on going to Persia more than thirty-six years ago, were three young men of the village of Geog-Tapa, on whom the Spirit of God had come with quickening power. They were leaders in the reformation that attended the teaching of the missionaries. One of them named Pastor John, was long a pastor in his native village, but many years since went to his eternal reward. A second one, known as Deacon Moses, still lives, a much respected gentleman and consistent Christian in the same village. The third, Yonan, known for many years as Malek Yonan, has occupied a more prominent position among his people than either of the others. In his early days, after leaving the missionary training school, Yonan engaged as a teacher chiefly. It was in that capacity I knew him best, for he helped me to get on to my missionary legs with the Syrian language. But among his own people he was famous for his power as a preacher. His expositions of Scripture were highly spiritual, original in thought and metaphor, and delivered with genuine eloquence. He was an orator of no mean power and was always a favorite speaker in any of the reformed pulpits. With the death of his uncle, the office of Malek of his people fell to him. It has not been an easy post to fill, though one of honor. As the spokesman of his people with Persian landholders, haughty and oppressive Moslems, he has suffered much from misunderstanding, suspicion, and rank hatred on either hand. But few Orientals could have escaped as free from reproach as he has done. He has remained loyal down to his old age to his missionary friends, and to the evangelical principles he imbibed at their hands, though sorely tempted at times to desert the one and the other. He has all his lifetime made much of the word of God. Its study has been his recreation from his worldly avocations. His handful of English commentaries have been used with diligence and profit. The family altar has not been neglected. There have his neighbors as well as his family been indoctrinated in divine truth, year in and year out. He has been ever an ardent supporter of the village Sabbath schools, because of their grand opportunities for impressing Scripture facts on the plastic minds of the young. Often he is invited to fill one or another pulpit in his native town, and counts it ever a pleasure to drop his secular avocations for a number of days to conduct a series of preaching services elsewhere. During his generation his influence has been felt far and wide in support of the reillumination of that Ancient Syrian Church out of the darkness and formalism into which it had fallen. His name will go down to future days as a landmark in the history of his people. May his last days on earth be his best days, and may he come to his end in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in its season."

NOTE.—After these pages were prepared for the press, the sad news came from my far-off home, announcing the death of my dear mother, which took place on the 22nd of April, 1897. During five years of our separation from each other,we have looked forward with happy anticipation to the day we would meet again. But now my hopes have taken the wings of the morning and gone forever, as far as time is concerned, leaving a heartaching, longing for one last word from her mouth, one look from her gentle eyes, and one kiss from her tender lips. I could not but feel it sorely for it was a mother's death. The many tears she has shed, many prayers she has offered for her children and especially for me, her youngest child, are being rewarded to-day. Thanks be to God for the blessed hope that we will meet again in the world of immortality.

I. M. YONAN.

DS266 .Y55
Persian women: a sketch of woman's life
Princeton Theological Seminary–Speer Library
1 1012 00023 1920